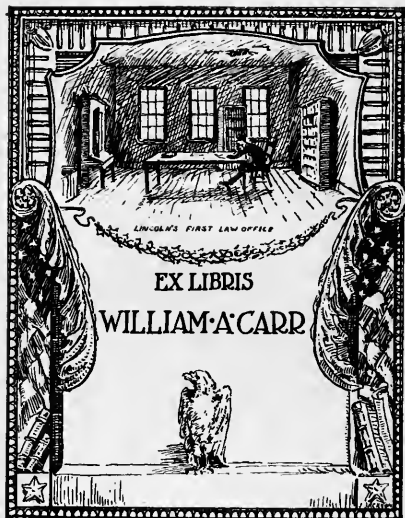


# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ROSE STRUNSKY



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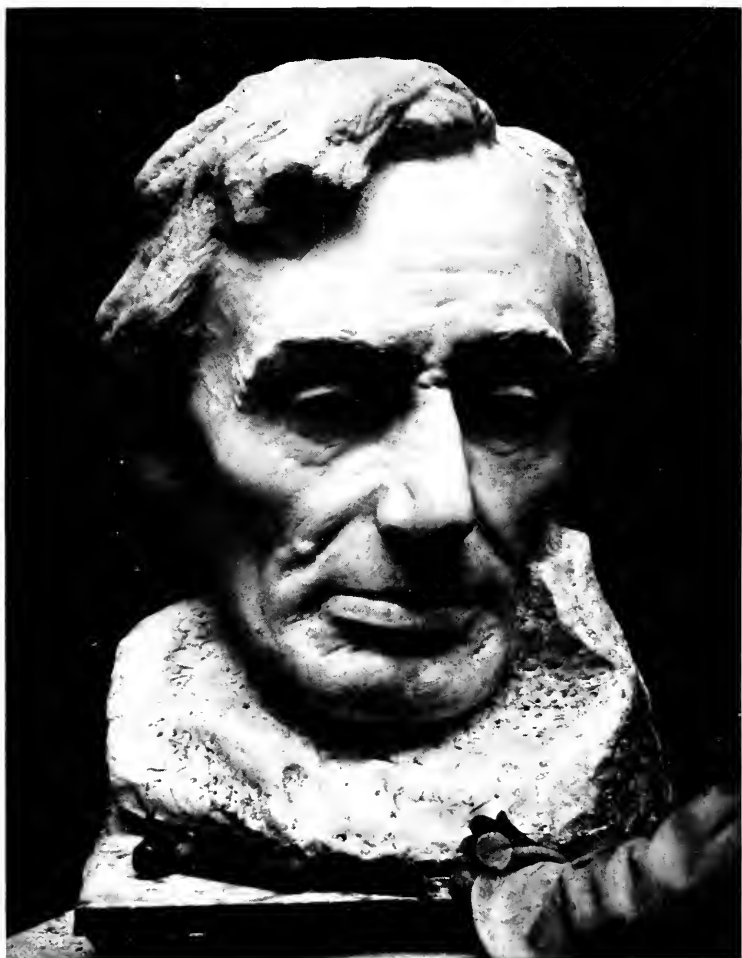




**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

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BUST OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
BY GUTZEN BORGLUM, WASHINGTON

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY  
ROSE STRUNSKY

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

NEW YORK  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1914



TO

**RUTH and REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN**





## PREFACE

I HAVE tried to give to the reader the picture of the man who has so firm a hold on the imagination of his people. To the average American the name of Abraham Lincoln is one to be conjured up in all the exigencies of political life, and his social ideals are to be applied in all the intricacies of modern adjustment. It is impossible to understand this hero-worship without a knowledge of the social and economic forces of America, which created the problems that confronted Abraham Lincoln when he became President of the United States, and of the way in which his solution of these problems epitomized the dominant forces of the country. These forces had been existent from the moment of the country's birth to the day when the last free lands were opened. So exactly did he express the gaunt, crude, virile America of the free lands, that it is only now, when that day is over and America sees itself confronted by a complex society of propertied and unpropertied classes, that he is being glorified as the apostle of true democracy.

In writing this book, I have not tried to find an unopened letter or an unpublished anecdote of the hero. If this book has any value it is in the new historical perspective which it throws upon the man and his time. The social and industrial development of to-day shows Lincoln to be neither a demi-god

nor merely a sentimental figure thrown out against a political background. He stands as the representative of a certain stage in American political history, and his importance lies in the fact that it was from this stage that the great present grew.

It is time his name conjured up a truer picture than that of a tall, gaunt man, looking out into space, in his hand the Emancipation Proclamation, and at his feet newly freed and grateful slaves. He is not "The Great Liberator" merely, he is part and parcel of his class, the small home-steader who claimed an equal opportunity in the virgin forests. As such he is not a hero, he is a people.

R. S.

*May 1914.*

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## INTRODUCTION

**D**EMOCRACY has brought with it its own hero. He is as new to the world as democracy is new, and we have not yet learned what to say about him. The older hero type was simple. Moreover, we had been trained to know what to expect. Trumpets blew when he entered, he strode across the stage, wilful, marshalling men and forces at the beckon of his finger and turning all into puppets before his masterful desire. He destroyed or built as he went his way, and we said So-and-So, Great Man that he was, passed along our road and was able to accomplish all this. We told his life step by step, and showed the monuments he created—simple things after all, built in wood and stone. He was clear to the eye, this hero of our past sagas.

But how are we to speak of the new hero? There is no flourish of trumpets at his entrance, he is no Man on Horseback, marshalling legions behind him, he has not built in wood and stone; in fact, he is no general and no builder, but good helmsman, great administrator. His deeds are wrought in social institutions and his works are part of civilization. They make the story of the slow coming of age of the people.

So we say we have had no life written of Abraham Lincoln worthy of that great man. Here is a people's hero, dead now fifty years, and the generations stand mystified before his gentle figure.

The truth is we have not been taught how to tell of his life. We say over and over again he was a good man; he was a great man; he died a martyr. What of it? Not knowing what he did we have crowned him with epithets which, fit or not, bespeak only our emotions. We called him the Emancipator, the Great Liberator, the Saviour of his Country. We were looking for our old-time hero of the sagas, and here came along one who made the people hero. We cannot tell his life by speaking of his life alone. We say he was born a poor boy, of Western pioneer stock, taught himself law, entered politics, and attained to the Presidency of the United States.

But all this does not tell his story.

While he was President, a four years' civil war broke out, and the nation was on the verge of ruin. He weathered the war, came forth victorious, and wiped out forever the cause of disunion, the institution of slavery which had existed from the country's beginning. Thus he became the Great Liberator and the Saviour. At the first flush of victory he was assassinated, and he became the Great Martyr.

Still, that does not tell the story of his life.

For once, the plain facts become meaningless. There was a reason for his election to the Presidency which lay apart from himself. He did not ride into the Capitol with fire and sword and capture it. He did not create the war. The liberation of the slaves, the overthrow of chattel slavery and the preservation of the Union of the United States on republican principles cannot be told as his deeds. They are greater than



he and he was more than a mere individual. We speak of one who was no more or less than the executive and administrator of the will of the people. Whatever were the ideals and desires and faults of the common people of his day were the ideals and desires and faults of Abraham Lincoln.

It matters not that with the onrushing change of time a new common people has arisen which perhaps would call that other people of Lincoln's day false and of a different calibre from itself. For such in truth were the peculiar conditions of America of the sixties that Lincoln's every act was an act in the name of the common people of the United States; and the ideals he strove for were their ideals. In the light of the present day we can quarrel with their ideal, or, accepting their ideal, we can quarrel with the manner of approach to it, but we cannot quarrel with the new hero of the people. His deeds are knit in the brawn and sinews of the nation. Upon the foundation he helped to lay stands the social order, good or bad, which we enjoy at present. To know him we must know the nation. No, we must go farther back and see how it was, why it was, when so great a crisis in the nation's life broke forth, that the strong and firm hand of Abraham Lincoln was needed to direct its course.

We are usually told that the nation went to war over the question of slavery. True, on the surface. But, when one begins to analyse that slavery, to which one-half the nation objected to so strongly, and for which the other half went to the length of declaring war, one finds, beneath the phrases of the time, that not slavery but property in land was the real cause of

the Civil War. It was not the three million Negroes in chains, not the tortures of the Uncle Toms at the whipping-posts, or the thought of the Elizas running over the broken ice with the blood-hounds behind them, that set the non-slave-holding whites so resolutely against the institution, but the fact that slavery meant large plantations and that they drove the small homesteader from the land. Even then the large landlord of the South might have travelled along peaceably towards the south-west and the small homesteader towards the north-west had not the sudden rise of railways brought the frontier close to civilization and thrust upon the people the problem as to whether the large or small property-owner was to be the first to rush into these newly-opened Eldorados and claim them for his own.

Slavery, from the point of view of the slave, had very little to do with the American Civil War. The freed Negro was not welcomed to the North as a competitor with free labour nor as a fellow property owner with his white neighbour. Slavery was objected to by the small homesteader only because he objected to the large landlord. True, the unskilled workers opposed slavery, on the ground that it degraded their labour and prevented their employment. But the unskilled worker was in a fair way in the fifties and sixties to becoming a small homesteader himself. He was not a labourer "fixed in that condition of life," to quote Lincoln. The skilled who worked in the cities and were "fixed in that condition" were in no way touched by the problem and remained, if anything, hostile to an agitation of abolition. "We too are slaves," they said,

“and we have not time to see to the liberation of others.” Besides the alignment of forces between the large landlord and the small landlord there was an antagonism between the merchants of the east who desired a high tariff and the planters of the south who were free traders. But the more serious division lay in the west, and was fought over the control of the new territories that were about to be opened.

It was property then, and not liberty which animated the American people in their struggle against the southern slave power. Yet it is typical of American democracy that the words liberty and property should have been interchangeable. The fact has a distinct potent significance in American history. With the riches of nature lying open and unexploited, the liberty to go out and acquire property was the main factor in American democracy, so that all through the country's history we see these successive risings of the many to power. Abstract French ideas of the rights of man were not lacking to sustain the people in what they called “the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” but these ideas translated meant for the American only the right of an equal economic opportunity to the bounties of nature.

The historic details which lead up to the crisis of 1860 have behind them the same significance—the struggle over property and the winning of the rights to property by the people—that is, by the many.

From the very beginning the approach of the Old World towards the New was only for exploitation and profit. Private monopolies were formed to hold

her, which were followed by the monopolies of governments, but the onrush of numbers into the New World kept hammering down the most impregnable of special privileges. In the first years of exploration and colonization monopoly of the land was easy, but labour was difficult to find. The wild backlands gave ready room for the labourer to escape and slavery was resorted to as a means of tying him down to the soil. In those days slavery took no account of race or colour. Native Indians, Negroes, indentured servants, company immigrants, all who could be impressed to work had to work. But the natives revenged themselves by massacres, the indentured servants and company immigrants escaped into the woods to acquire property of their own, and it was only the bewildered Negro who could be brought into this strange land and be kept in bondage forever by the brand of colour.

The discovery of the black race in the same era which produced the discovery of the New World helped to free the white man and the Indian from a serfdom which existed all over Europe at this time. If one could forget that slavery in America was based on colour, the history of American slavery would become simple and readily understood. It was not at all an institution peculiar or indigenous to America, but was part of the problem of large landlordism which existed in Europe even long after the Napoleonic period.

Slavery, it is true, was intensified in America by the home governments in the interests of the home slavers, so that there was often an over-importation of slaves

against which the large landlord in the colonies himself protested. "He has prostituted his negative," wrote Jefferson, indicting George III., "by suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce." He had indeed! But the legislative attempts on the part of the colonies were made much more to restrain than to prohibit the trade, for as long as tobacco brought \$12 a pound in the London market slaves would be called for. It was the fear of servile insurrection and the fact that in the hundred years of colonization there were already enough slaves in Maryland and Virginia to build up an inter-colonial slave trade that caused the various attempts to place taxes on the importation of slaves—often enough disallowed by the Crown. However, so little were the colonists themselves against slavery that a prohibition against it in Georgia lasted hardly fourteen years. The colony was founded for military purposes, and therefore large landlordism and slavery were prohibited in the hope that a sufficient population of small landowners would settle and form an effective outpost against a Spanish invasion. But from the first the regulation against slavery was violated by "hiring" Negroes "for life," and finally by 1749 the restriction against slavery and large estates had to be annulled by the Board of Governors of the colony.

And yet at the very same time patriot parties were forming, and ideas of freedom were running riot. They were directed against old-world traditions of hereditary aristocracy and class privilege, and not against the monopoly of wealth. The large manorial estates of

Maryland never attained any higher distinction than plantations, the theocracy of Massachusetts was early overthrown, primogeniture did not last many generations, and the wrenching of Home Rule from the Crown began long before the Revolution. "Liberty and Property" was the slogan of the American patriot. "Liberty to property" would have been more accurate. Nowhere in the world was property so general as it was in the New World, and consequently nowhere was there so much liberty.

Who could keep the people back? There lay the treasure very much as it did in Ali Baba's cave. One had but to say "Open Sesame" and the treasure was one's own. How then begrudge one's neighbour. No wonder then that, in spite of the idealistic theories of freedom, the actual practice in government and in property control as laid down by the colonial governments and by the new Republic itself held contradictions and gaps which, from the point of view of statesmanship, are difficult to reconcile. No safeguard was thought of to prevent a collapse of the free society of the American patriot. To Ali Baba's supposedly inexhaustible cave was left the fortunes of that eternal freedom that was to reign in the New World.

Having successfully gained for himself the special privileges of land and trade which the English Crown had tried to hold, the American launched his new Republic on a system of compromise and bargains which were out of harmony with the ideals he advocated. In the fundamental and all-important problems of representation and taxation he made bargains with the easy conscience of a king who can do

no wrong. In spite of his theories of the rights of man he feared a democratic representation in Congress according to population, and he made a compromise by which the states and not the people were to be equally represented in the Senate, and though representation in the Lower House was given according to population the demands of the people were thought to be effectively blocked by high property qualifications for the suffrage. The answer of the American to any objection to these restrictions was—You have the liberty to acquire property.

As to the matter of slavery, the Constitutional Convention politely and discreetly refrained from mentioning so painful a subject frankly. Slavery was not popular at the time. Louisiana had not yet been purchased, nor had the machine revolution begun, so that the institution seemed to be on the verge of extinction for want of space and use. In the legislature of Virginia itself, only a few years before the revolution, slavery had failed of abolishment by only two votes.

As early as 1774, in the first flare-up of revolution, three states in the association that was formed to boycott English goods—Rhode Island, North Carolina and Virginia—mentioned slaves especially. It happened, however, that the slave markets were overstocked and it was to the interest of the planter to have an interim in which to extricate himself from debt to the merchants. As the boycott succeeded in the good work of causing the slave merchants in Liverpool to fail to the sum of £710,000, slaves became scarce in America and smugglers made fortunes. It is difficult to divide idealism from practicality.

However, the First Continental Congress, following along the ideas of the Association, went so far as to resolve to "wholly discontinue the slave trade." But the virtuous resolution meant nothing, for the strain of the war, which soon brought with it the problem of getting bread for the people, was too great for pure idealism to last long. In the second year Congress began permitting the importation of certain British goods, but held out against the slaves, this time in a temporary resolution, not in a promise as in the year before. By the end of the war the country was in such need of food and money that the Constitutional Convention was ready to make any agreement as long as it seemed to put the new nation on a working basis. Thus, on the question of slavery, though South Carolina and Georgia were the only two states which still held a strong brief for it, the Convention consented to formulate its plans of taxation and representation with the institution as an *a priori* condition. The North accepted the fact that slaves were property and even haggled over the tax on them. The South would have liked to consider them men as far as votes were concerned. A compromise was agreed upon by which the South paid a three-fifth tax on the slaves provided they had a three-fifth representation in Congress. The compromise was not at all as even as it sounds, for neither the North nor the South meant that the negroes were to have the suffrage or were to represent themselves. The South gained a reduction of their taxes on slaves and the power to count them as electoral material. Thus a man with a thousand adult male slaves might consider his plantation six hundred votes for Congressmen. Of course the planters with a



thousand slaves were few. Even as late as 1850 there were only two whose slaves amounted to a thousand or more. The total number of slaves in the South at the time of the revolution was half a million. The North, in making the bargain, was not very much aroused over the existence of slaves—it was over the subject of the slave-trade that the tug came. Here, they thought, lay the cause of slavery, never having known one without the other.

It was over the third bargain then that the country was stirred. Besides philanthropic reasons, there were practical ones for its hostility to the slave-trade. The commercial interests of the east were very anxious to gain Navigation Acts and the privilege of enacting import duties. The steady increase in slaves might give the South, with its privilege of a three-fifth vote on its slave population, the preponderance of political power. The South, on the other hand, was bent upon denying to Congress any power to pass Navigation Acts except by a three-fifths vote, and refusing it the right to tax exports. It was finally agreed upon that the slave-trade should be prosecuted for another twenty years, and that Congress be empowered to pass Navigation Acts. Thus in the name of freedom to property and economic opportunity for all was the New Republic hastily put together and launched.

Yet the constitutional contradictions which bound the nation together were not of such an insurmountable nature after all. Lying inherent in this new land were factors which actually made possible the ideals of freedom and democracy despite the hesitation of the Congressmen who sat behind closed doors and made

their bargains in secret. As a guarantee of life and freedom to the New Nation the original thirteen colonies gave over to the Federal Government the keeping of the vast stretches of land to the West which had been theirs by the original charters. To this new Western world the people surged and built for themselves a free society. They had looked upon this land as theirs, even before the Revolution. One of the grievances against the king had been the attempt to hold a monopoly of these Western lands and to prevent emigration. But the valleys of the Mohawk and the Monongahela were being peopled by the mass of pioneers, and before a plan of government could be made for the nation at large, this West came demanding that some plan for its own organization be agreed upon. It had to live and grow and could not wait for bargains. The North-west Ordinance had to be passed quickly, and when, in the parlance of the American, it was "dedicated to freedom," the immigrant and the Continental soldier, and the already disappointed farmer from the rocky New England soil, could, by pushing along the borders of Lake Champlain and by going down the Mohawk and Genesee rivers come upon rich land open to all. Though the land speculator was there ahead he could not disinherit them to the same degree as could the large landlord with his slaves.

True, the older states, watchful of their privileges, took advantage of their constitutional rights. Quickly South Carolina and North Carolina ceded strips of land to Congress, so that a South-west territory that was slave-soil might be formed to preserve the southern equilibrium in the New Republic. But the westward

march of men kept increasing year by year, and the great converging highways led always to the North, from Kentucky, from Tennessee, along the Cumberland and the Ohio. Very early the population of the free North outnumbered the slave South. To maintain its power the South needed only land, not men. Tobacco, rice, indigo, cotton, these made new lands continually profitable. Besides a need for territorial expansion for its economic growth, it needed land for its political growth. Here came in for the South the value of the work which the framers of the Constitution had accomplished. The slave South kept creating as many states as the free North, so that despite the disparity in population a political equality could be maintained. So earnest was the South in its desire to enlarge itself that the slave-states were almost invariably brought up for admission before the free, the latter generally following a year later. Before the year 1808 came, when the slave-trade was actually abolished by law, Louisiana had been bought, the cotton gin had been invented, and the slave-holding emigrant of the southwest found land and opportunity for his institution. By 1820 he had pushed himself towards the Gulf, had so intrigued and fought in Florida, that it was sold to him for a song by Spain, and was about to cross over the Mississippi and establish himself there. But there the dangerous rivalry began to be felt, and when Missouri was ready for admission into the Union a two-years' struggle ensued in which were heard the threats of secession and the arguments for strict limitations of Congress which were to be the motifs of the great drama of 1860.

Though the North-west and the South-west were friends, the products of one going to the markets of the other down the great artery of the Mississippi, and though both were alike in a spirit of aggressive democracy, in a suspicion of central power and of class rule, their friendship could only last as long as there was no encroachment of the one upon the territories of the other. Already the plantation system in the South had extended from the tide-water to the uplands. The non slave-holding white was pushed into the barren sand-hills and pine regions of the South, or, to extricate himself, was forced to migrate into the free lands of Indiana and Illinois. To permit slavery to cross the Mississippi was to permit it to exclude him from his right to the land for which he had defied the regulations of the central government and all the titles of the Indians. But with the characteristic constitutional mind of the American he made a bargain which, as bargains go, and with the future still undisclosed to him, must have seemed pretty well done after all. "There," he said to the slave-holder, "we will put a line (very far down, if you please) below which shall be slave-land, and above which shall be free." The line was  $36^{\circ}30'$ , which would have been the southern boundary of Missouri, and would have left very little which was not already slave territory to be considered as such. The Northerner lost somewhat in the bargain by permitting Missouri, which had the institution already well established within it, to be admitted as a slave state. To preclude an overbalance in the nation, Massachusetts ceded her western lands, and Maine was created, free of course. Thus in the Union, in 1820, there were eleven free states, and eleven slave

states, and, west of these, what is known as the Missouri Compromise Line, which seemingly left very little more to slavery towards the south and gave a vast tract of land leading up to the Canadian border to freedom.

This would not have been so bad a bargain between brothers who understood one another and were really friends at bottom, had not the miracles of the future come in such numbers and in such quick succession. The Compromise of 1820 came when the transition era was hardly a decade old and its import was not yet felt. Steam appeared upon the Northern waters in 1811 and by 1820 there were already two and a half million souls in the trans-Alleghany States, while the older sections remained almost stationary. The rush westward kept increasing. In 1820 land could be bought in lots of eighty acres at \$1.25 an acre instead of as heretofore, in one hundred and sixty acre lots at \$2.00 an acre.

The constantly-improving transportation not only sent the emigrant westward in increasing numbers, but created an internal commerce of a wide radius. The surplus production was sent down the Mississippi and along the roads of the East. Pork, flour, tobacco, whisky, the raw materials of primitive agriculture, but to the value of many millions, were the products of this vast colonial society. It needed money and it took to itself the right of banking, destroying the National Bank through its first emissary into the National Government, President Jackson; it needed internal improvements and it took the revenues of the Government, supplemented them with the paper currency and promissory notes of its own states, and went into the business of better transportation; it

needed home markets and it created for itself the "American system" of tariff protection, under which the young industries of the East joined with the infant cities of the West.

Had there been no possibility of land expansion in the very noonday of their power, the democracy of the North-west and the democracy of the South-west could have travelled along side by side, growing towards an adjustment to each other without much regard to the problem of negro slavery. But the very factors which drew the North-west and South-west together for a score of years separated them in the succeeding score. By 1840 a new South and a new North were in existence. The marvellous inventions in cotton machinery and the improved transportation had turned the South into a homogeneous whole. Though the plantations shifted towards the Gulf states, the tide-water states became the slave-breeders for them, and a strong feeling of solidarity resting on a mutual interest existed in this section.

What is known as the Cotton Kingdom arose, which, alert and self-conscious, no longer apologized for its "peculiar institution," but justified it economically, politically and morally. Its whole social order was arranged and specialized to feed its one great industry—cotton. The slave-holders did not compose more than one-sixth of the population of the South, but they knew the art of class-rule and successfully dominated their section. While the society of the North was coming more and more to rest on manhood suffrage and the free homestead, suffrage in the South was extended only with the extension of the slave-holders, and power in the legis-

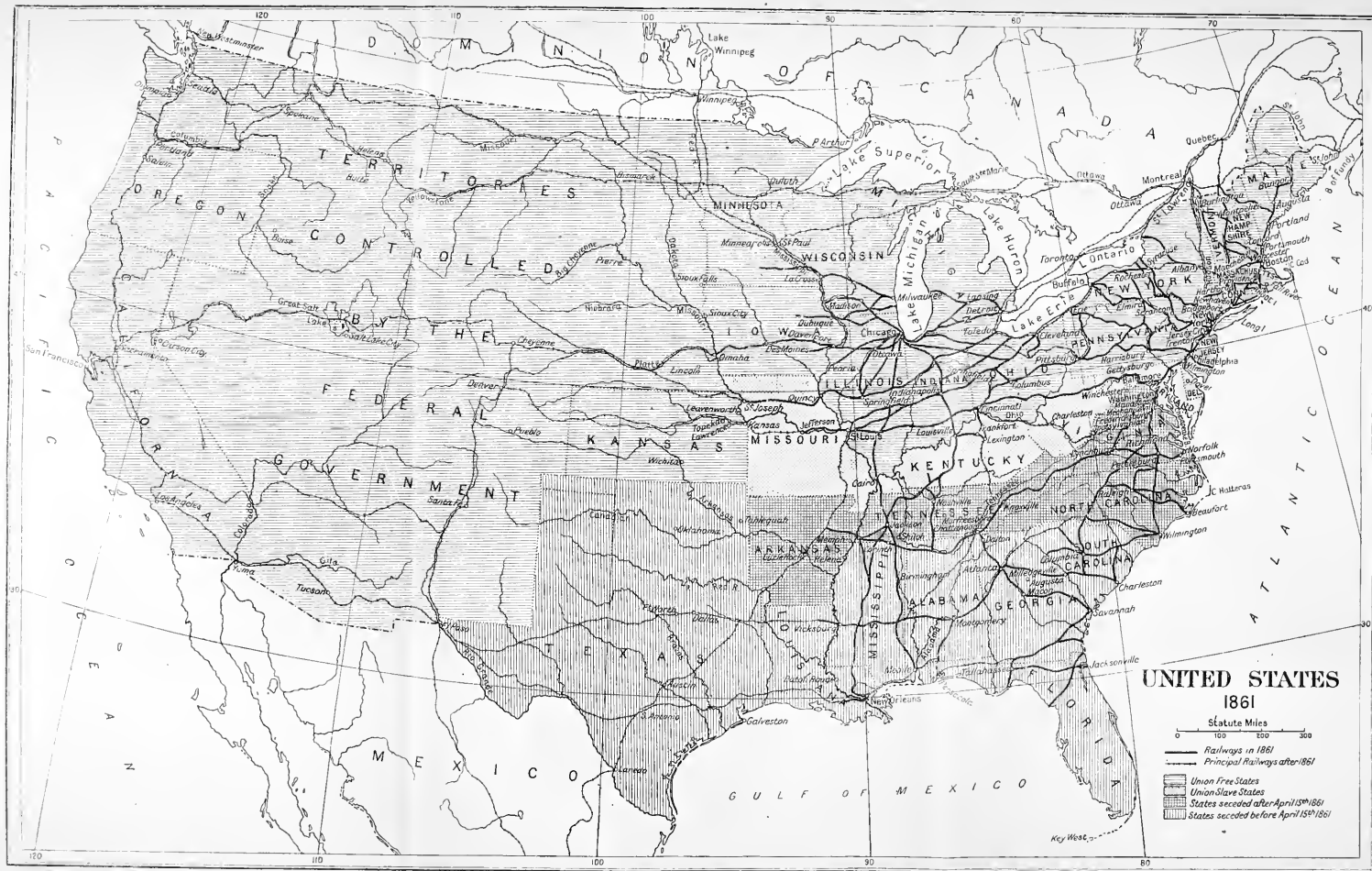


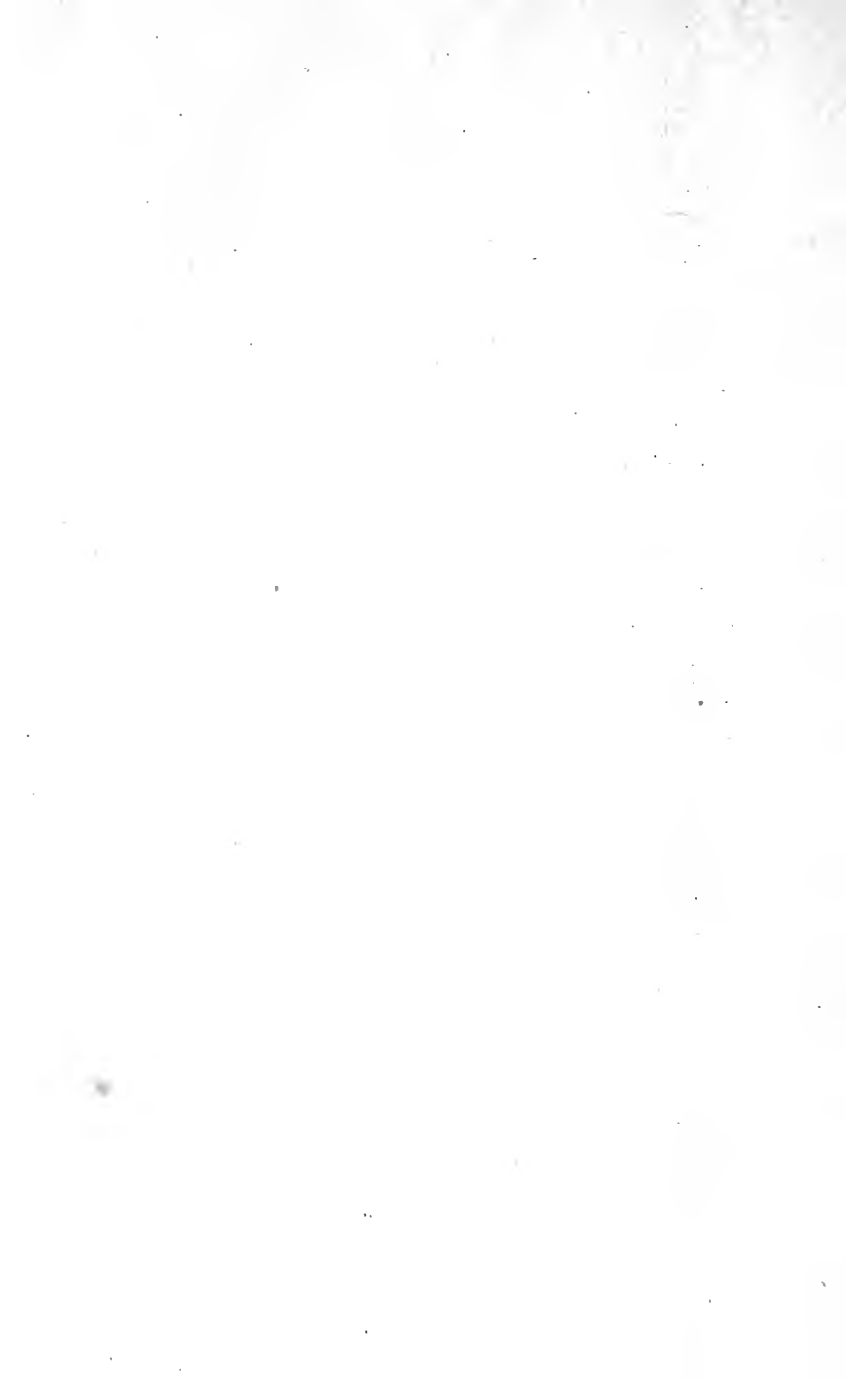
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latures were given only to those sections that resembled the original landed aristocracies of the seaboard. Thus it had a united oligarchy which stood ready and on guard to further its interests or prevent attack from opposing forces. "The South" became a term in politics to denote an almost separate national entity, and so while development in the North was manifold, development in the South was single. Even the railways, which produced so extraordinary a growth in the North, and were a factor in its unification, were made use of in the South only as a means to bring cotton to the rivers. By 1860 three parallel lines of railways were running, though intermittently, from the coast to the Mississippi. But it was not until late in the 'fifties that the lines had begun to be laid, and the through line from Charleston to the river was not completed until two years before the war.

In the North they crossed and recrossed themselves, forming a network which lay spread from the Great Lakes to the Ohio, and reached to the edge of the Atlantic. By 1860 they looked very much like a spider's web, whose threads were joined to rivers and towns and farmlands. As they developed the land intensively they kept continually pushing the frontier line farther away. Development for the North meant land and citizens, for the South land and slaves.

The friendship that had existed between the two sections and had enabled the Missouri Compromise Line of 1820 to be passed was now over. The South began to make its moves for new land, the North accepted the lands won, only to send down its people and defeat the purposes of the South. These manœuvres began with

the fomenting of an insurrection in Texas in 1830 by American slave-holders, and wresting that province from Mexico. After almost eight years of controversy Texas was annexed and admitted in the Union, but though seventy-five thousand slaves were added not the many slave states were carved from it as had been hoped and planned. It was admitted as one territory, and later as one state, and Oregon, a land free-soil by nature, was quickly admitted at the same time as Texas to uphold the political balance.

From the annexation of Texas there followed the war with Mexico, also undertaken for the purposes of slavery, but ultimately to accrue to the advantage of the stronger force—the free states. The North supported the war with men and money, and with a goodly sprinkling of crocodile tears—(for land after all was land, and not to be despised!). It tried to keep the lands to be won by the war with Mexico for itself by a proviso which sought to apply the North-west Ordinance of 1787 to them and thus keep them free-soil.

But the South became wary and shrewd. It evolved two policies, one for the administration which was frankly pro-slavery, the other for the people which hedged. "Slavery," it said to the people, "was not the issue before the nation, but the right of the individual settler to the choice of any institution he saw fit to establish." It played to the inherent distrust of central government felt by the Westerner. State rights and limitations of Congress were again urged despite the fact that it was the Democracy of the South which used the powers of State, the Supreme Court and the Administration to further its ends. This theory of popular

sovereignty, as it was called saved the Democratic Party for another ten years, for with the persistent alignment of new forces the old political parties of the country had soon to go.

The Whigs, the party of Conservative business interests and commerce, of tariff and protection, the inheritors of Hamilton and Adams, could find no such happy solution as "popular sovereignty," and were soon to be wrecked before the great obstacle of slavery. A new party entirely was being born in the 'forties, based frankly and squarely upon the true issues before the growing country. This was the Radical Free-soil party of the West, whose one cry was, "A free soil for a free people." It offered no theories of abolition of slavery, and was not concerned with it as was the philanthropic Liberty Party of the East. It was concerned only with the problem of holding the new land for itself. Its ranks were made up of disaffected Whigs and Democrats. The Free-Soilers were ultimately to join with the Liberty Party and create the party of the Republicans, whose conservative but practical platform of the non-extension of slavery into the territories was to sweep the North in 1860.

But before this event could take place, the American spirit of Compromise was again to be invoked. When the question of organization of the new territories acquired by the Mexican War actually came up before Congress—territories equal in size to all of Eastern Europe put together—the new Democratic theory of popular sovereignty was incorporated. New Mexico was organized without any restriction to slavery, and without the Compromise of 1820 being applied to it. On the

other hand the democratic policy of administrative control was far from being abandoned, and a new stringent Fugitive Slave Law was passed which almost forced the recognition of the institution by the free states.

But popular sovereignty, even when manipulated by administrative control, could not be forced to act in favour of a class and against the interests of the people to whom sovereignty is given. Already by 1849 California was sufficiently peopled by the rush to the gold-diggings to form a state and to demand admission into the Union on an absolutely free basis, rejecting the Compromise Line of 1820. The territories of New Mexico and Utah were also permitted to form constitutions of their own, with the result that they voted for freedom.

For the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" to accrue to the benefit of its promoters it was necessary that the sovereign people themselves be slave-holders, or at least that the new lands to be acquired be suitable for slavery, so that the institution could be easily planted and would take root quickly. Here too the alert and eager Cotton Kingdom developed two policies: one was the acquiring of lands to the south, the other was the peopling, with slave-holders, of the territory next to be admitted into the Union. The Democracy cried loud that the "Manifest destiny of America" needed Cuba, Central America and Mexico. But much as the Administration helped with its Ostend Manifesto, with the fomenting of insurrections, and with Walker's filibustering expeditions, the day for territorial aggrandisement towards the south in the interest of slavery was over. The North and North-West stood watchful.

The last expedient before the final breaking away was then attempted. The Missouri Compromise Line of 1820, which had been placed across the Louisiana purchase, was repealed (annulled, the Democrats said, by the Compromise measures of 1850, which had failed to apply the Line), and the test of "popular sovereignty" with the attempt to supervise the type of settler to be given sovereignty was inaugurated in Kansas and Nebraska—the regions thus opened. Civic-minded Southern gentlemen funded societies for the emigration of slave-holders and settlers in general who would promise to hold Kansas, the immediate territory in question, for slavery. But it was a precarious matter, bringing slave-property to a region unstable in its protection of it. The best that could be done was the pouring in of transients for a day who would do their duty at the polling booths and then return to their homes.

Here the North obviously had the advantage. On its part emigrant aid societies were formed which sent in *bona-fide* settlers by the thousands, whose property lay secure in their own labour and who came to claim the land for themselves and not for a class. The test of "popular sovereignty" was a test between the classes, and the people won. For two years civil war reigned in Kansas. Troops were sent in by the Administration to take the side of the Southern democracy, blood was spilled, but Kansas came forth from the clash of interests a free state.

The South felt itself too strong and vital to be beaten. It snapped its Democratic Party in two with its hedging theories of "popular sovereignty," and came out boldly for the recognition of slavery in the

territories and the protection of it by the Federal Government. Upon the sea of this divided Democracy the Republican Party rode into power, and Abraham Lincoln, its candidate for president, was elected as the executive of the people's will. The course of the Republic was again to flow along the ideals and doctrines which first animated it. The meaning of the framers of the Constitution was studied. The principle of economic opportunity for all was again asserted and in the name of the fundamental laws of the country the new President entered upon his duties.

But the South, unable to control the government constitutionally, made a desperate attempt to control it by force. A union of fifteen slave states was formed, secession proclaimed and a new Republic based on landlord and slave established. "The irrepressible conflict" had begun, for by virtue of the territories won, and the development of industries and transportation the United States of America by 1860 was a nation. For four bitter years the conflict raged over a battlefield colossal in size. It was a revolution, a struggle of the people for the maintenance of their rights against vested interests. And, strange as it may sound to history, it was the vested interests that hard-pressed on the defensive turned and proved aggressor. To such menacing strength had the people waxed in the New World! And this people sent forth their own hero, created in their own image, and stand now abashed before his greatness. "How was it that we found an Abraham Lincoln?" they ask. Out of their great will they created him and out of their great need they sent him forth. They wrought better than they knew, for it



was an hour when their onward march was to lead them farther than they knew.

For four "years of battle-days" he served them. Unswerving and clear-headed he directed his forces and let himself be directed with that masterful genius which can only come to a hero of the New Order. In his life is written all of America. Through a vision of the people can be seen the figure of him who like that Someone "walks fast on the white, to calm all things back again."



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## CHAPTER I

### LINCOLN'S BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

**I**T was the year 1809. In Europe one man, short of stature and rather wide of girdle, was overthrowing age-old dynasties and creating new coalitions of peoples, new institutions and new orders, where serf and lord were to be no more, and property was to receive the special privilege heretofore given to blood. In America, a republic, based on the rights of man to the goods of nature, had already been established for twenty-two years. The questions of government and of world-policy which troubled the men at her head, and the problems as to whose lead in the Old World she should follow, were being now brushed aside by a stream of backwoodsmen, fiercely self-centred and democratic. They were the creators of the real America, the true builders of the nation. At this time they had already broken through the mountains of the Alleghenies, and were winning to themselves Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. Men of the Western Waters, or men of the Western World, they called themselves, who in another decade were to wrench the nation entirely away from the Mother World and build an America unique and self-reliant, patterned after their own desire.

In that year 1809, when America was being created

in the sweat of the backwoodsman and the slave, and Europe was being regenerated by a nation of soldiers, Abraham Lincoln was born in a little log cabin in Kentucky, thirteen miles from Elizabethtown, a son of these "first Americans" and a native of this New West. The settler, following fast on the feet of the trapper and the pioneer, had already turned Kentucky into a State of the Union, and the Virginian, with his retinue of slaves, had already pre-empted institutions. The poor white, the small farmer and the artisan, unable to compete with slavery, found himself at this date in Kentucky pushed to the "barrens," or was making his way north to the new and free lands.

Abraham Lincoln was born on the 12th February to just such a poor white family, living in just such conditions of misery which the already stratified state of Kentucky forced upon the free white artisan. The father, Thomas Lincoln, a wandering labourer, had been taught the trade of carpentering, but he seems to have been able to accomplish very little with it except marry Nancy Hanks, the niece of his employer. He was brought to the State of Kentucky as a child of two. His father, Abraham Lincoln, a man apparently of wealth, for he bought four hundred acres of farm land in that region of Virginia later to become Kentucky, and had paid for it in currency. Thither he migrated with his wife and five children in the year 1780. The fortunes of the Abraham Lincoln to come might have been different had death not come early to this first Abraham Lincoln in Kentucky; but the toll of the New World was taken from the family of the Lincolns as it was being taken from the whole intrepid band of pioneers. A marauding Indian

fell upon the father as he was working in the fields with his young boys, and killed him. The older children ran to the fort and to the farmhouse for guns and help, while Thomas, the youngest, a lad of six, was left alone with the dead body. The Indian was stooping down to kidnap the child when he, in turn, was shot by one of the young brothers who had reached the house and found his gun. Thus on the slight hazard of a correct aim was the future father of Abraham Lincoln saved and history not tricked.

By the laws of primogeniture, which still existed in Virginia, the estate of Abraham Lincoln went to his eldest son, Mordecai. The rest of the family scattered to the new lands; only the mother and the little Thomas remained in Kentucky. The boy was let grow as he listed, but without means for an education and without property to establish himself, he reached the age of twenty-seven, the year of his marriage, a brawny, wandering labourer, a poor white, unlettered and untaught, except for his trade of carpentering. It was his wife Nancy who first taught him how to sign his name.

In the story of the wanderings of Thomas Lincoln and that of his whole family lies part of the history of America. They had come from the West of England to Massachusetts in 1638, and had followed the general course of westward migration from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania, from Pennsylvania to Virginia, from Virginia to Kentucky, and now, having become a family of poor whites, they were to linger in Kentucky a few years longer, pushed into the "barrens," and then begin their wanderings again from Kentucky to Indiana, and from Indiana to Illinois. It was by this course that pioneer America was built.

At the time of his marriage Thomas Lincoln lived in Elizabethtown and tried to eke out a living by his trade. With the birth of a daughter in the following year came a fresh impulse to better his condition, and he tried farming, which was the most hopeful experiment that the poor white could make in the South. But as cheapness and easy payments had to be considered more than the quality of the land, he found himself on an arid and sterile strip on the Big South Fork of Nolin Creek in La Rue County. Its most valuable asset was a clear spring of water, and the place was named Rock Spring Farm. On this thankless bit of land the boy Abraham was born.

For five years the family struggled against the cruelty of arid land. Finally Thomas Lincoln made another attempt to better himself. Six miles from Hodgenville, on Knob Creek, he bought a larger and better farm containing two miles and thirty-eight acres. Neither on the first farm nor on the second were there any records of payments made, transactions in those days flourishing very well under the system of promissory notes. Whether it was because this land did not prove any more satisfactory than the first, or because payments were insisted upon, we find him four years later, in 1816, making the migration into the newer lands of Indiana. He left his family in Kentucky, built a raft, put on it his kit of tools and four hundred gallons of whisky, and went into the unknown. The whisky was his wherewithal to pay for the new land. After exploring the neighbouring country for about a day, he chose a spot in the wilderness which pleased him, and walked back into Kentucky for his wife and children.

All their worldly possessions they placed on the backs of two borrowed horses, and the little cavalcade cut its way into the forest, where Thomas Lincoln had decided to start life anew. The place was called Little Pigeon Creek, and was a mile and a half east of Gentryville.

They built themselves a shelter called a "half-faced camp," in the language of the frontiersman. It was a shed of poles, protected only on three sides. Here the family lived a whole year, while the father cleared a patch of ground for the corn and laid the foundations of a more permanent home, a log cabin. Before this was finished, without floors or doors or windows, they moved in, for the Sparrows, relatives of Mrs Lincoln, had followed them to this new region of Indiana, and the half-faced camp was given over to them.

The cabin was of one room, with a loft to which the boy Abraham climbed to his bed of leaves at night by a ladder made of wooden pins driven into the logs. The room had a table made of a hewn log, and a bed built of poles stuck into the corner of the room, the outside corner supported by a crotched stick.

Under such conditions, man lost in the fight with nature. In the fall an epidemic called the "milk sick" fell upon them, no doubt caused by the cows drinking from some miasmatic spring. The Sparrow family died, and a few days later Nancy Hanks, the mother, succumbed. There were left a young lad, Dennis Hanks, Thomas Lincoln, the father, and the sister and brother, Sarah and Abraham, aged ten and nine. The dead were buried in a little clearing of the forest, laid in coffins cut by the whip-saw of the sole head of the family.

Then the little orphaned group remained huddled together in this outermost solitude all winter.

The boy Abraham had his standards of life. There were things of too much meaning to let pass without some gesture. And the unceremonious burial in the forest haunted him. When he heard that a wandering preacher had reached the neighbourhood, he tramped many miles in the snow to bring him to the spot where the dead lay, so that a funeral sermon might be delivered over the now white grave.

It was not to be his only acquaintance with death before he reached manhood. But in the meantime a more comfortable change came to him. In the autumn the father left the children in the lonely cabin and tramped through the wilderness to Elizabethtown in Kentucky, and there wooed and married on the same day Sarah Busch, whom he brought back to the little lonely group in Gentryville to be the new mother to them. The story goes that he had known her as a girl, that he loved her then, but was refused for the more prosperous jailer of the town. Now, as a widow with three children, she accepted this good-natured, unsuccessful carpenter-farmer. She was far above him in life as to the matter of worldly goods, she had enough to pile high on a four-horse waggon, all of which she took with her on her venture into the wilderness. From this time on the children had warmer clothes to cover them, and softer beds to sleep on. A door was put in the cabin, and a floor was laid. In later years, when the boy, grown to manhood, spoke of his sainted and hallowed mother, it was difficult to know which mother he meant. The biographers say it was the woman



who came to mother him in his tenth year. The other was as one set apart, too bound up with intimate suffering, too unreasonably and wantonly snatched away to be spoken of to outsiders. This other mother, of whom he could speak and whom the world knew, created a larger home for him. With her came three children and a young pioneer—the son of the master carpenter from whom the father had learned his trade.

The boy Abraham helped his father until his fifteenth year, and then was set to work to earn his bread on neighbouring farms. Somehow he knew how to read and write and count. There were schools now and then, but in all his life he could not count up a year of schooling. Yet native intelligence was his. Moreover, the community, despite its fight against savage conditions, carried with it the traditions and thoughts of civilization. The idea of the school was fixed, as the idea of law and order, of the court-house, of the jail and the town meeting-house. Books could be had for the quest. The boy found the Bible, *Æsop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a History of the United States and a Life of Washington. If the worst came to the worst, he read the revised statutes of Indiana at the town constable's, or the dictionary, over which he would pore by the hour. The farmers about say he did not like to work much, that he cared for his pay and his dinner more, and his book most of all. It was to the book that his thoughts wandered as he impatiently split the rails or broke the ground. "When he came home from work," said John Hanks, the young pioneer who came to live with them, "he would go to a cupboard, snatch a piece of currant bread, sit down,

cock his legs up as high as his head, and read." So he sat on his shoulder-blades, Western fashion, even towards the very end of his life, when hard at work. He had no paper for his tasks, and he used the wooden shovel to write on, scraping it off and beginning again when he had reached the bottom. They say he was tenderer than the rest of the boys, that the wanton murder of the tortoises and other creatures hurt him, that he loved the solitude, and that he liked to lie under a tree and dream. Unfortunately we cannot put our finger on this school or that method which had its greatest influence on his formative period. His was an intelligent, sensitive nature, battling hard with the difficulties of uncontrolled phenomena. That he was not swamped by them, but came out stronger, we know.

At the age of nineteen he emerged from the forest, six feet four inches and strong as a young ox. His prowess in lifting chicken-houses of six hundred pounds and shouldering posts of great weight make the traditional stories of Spencer County. At this age he was to have his first glimpse of the outside world. A certain Mr Gentry, the founder of Gentryville, hired him to accompany his son, who was to bring produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans in a flat-boat. This contact with the world made the narrow primitive life of the backwoods insufficient and he determined to leave his father and forge ahead alone. But before setting out he helped him to make his last migration to new lands. John Hanks went to Macon County, Indiana, and liked the prairies and the woods of the new country so well that he persuaded the little household in Gentryville to move to this Eldorado. The old place had never paid; besides,

it had grown too sorrowful with death, for now it was the boy Abraham's only sister who was taken from them.

The whole family, the stepmother and the half-sisters and their husbands, with Dennis Hanks, Thomas Lincoln and the young Abraham, with all their combined wealth, which was placed on a single waggon, drawn by two yoke of oxen, travelled for two weeks over the forest roads and prairies, and arrived at the little spot which John Hanks had chosen for them on the north fork of the Sangamon River in Illinois. The boy's last service was to help clear fifteen acres of land and split enough rails to put a fence around them. Then he wandered off to seek his fortune.

Already the State of Illinois, where the young Lincoln sought to gain a foothold in life, was ending its pioneer stage. It was a territory of settlements with a population of over 157,000. Here Lincoln met an optimistic and speculative business man, called Offutt, who engaged him, together with Hanks and the half-brother, John Johnston, to take again a flat-boat with cargo to New Orleans. They were to have fifty cents a day and a contingent dividend of twenty dollars apiece. They paddled down the Sangamon, walked five miles to the tavern where they were to hold their rendezvous, and found that Offutt had not even the flat-boat ready. Nothing daunted, they built the boat themselves, hewing the timber "taken innocently from Congressland," and put on the cargo. They got as far as New Salem, where the flat-boat stuck on the mill-dam, to the excitement of the entire population, which came out upon the water's edge to watch the mishap. The bow oar, who was no other than Lincoln, described as a gigantic

youth, with his trousers rolled up some five feet, was the only one who seemed to know what to do. He arranged a contrivance by which the cargo was unloaded, the boat tilted, and the water ingeniously let out by boring a hole through the bottom. The exploit gained the enthusiastic admiration of his employer, and even caused Lincoln's mind to turn to an invention which he called Lifting Vessels over Shoals. Many years later he whittled his little contrivance and took a patent on it. But the only use it seems to have is as an exhibit to the curious visitors at the Department of the Interior.

John Hanks says that it was on this trip that Lincoln first saw negroes chained, maltreated, whipped and scourged. No doubt he saw the same thing on the other trip to New Orleans, for it was the great slave mart of the South. Twenty-five years later, writing to his friend, Joshua Speed, of Kentucky, of a trip they took together from Louisville to St Louis, he says: "You may remember as well as I will that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were ten or a dozen slaves shackled together in irons. That sight was a continual torment to me, and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which is, and continually exercises the power of making me miserable." The sight of the slaves chained and shackled made him miserable, as did the wretched poverty and death-dealing conditions of his pioneer home. But it did not make him revolt either against slavery or against his home conditions. It made him melancholy, but not angry. He learned how to get one

degree the better of them, but he never repudiated them entirely. To his mind they were the inevitable materials which formed the basis of the life about him, and unlike the Abolitionists and other idealists of the time he never took a definite stand against them.

When he returned from his second trip to New Orleans he went to New Salem again, to help Offutt, who was a man of many schemes. Unfortunately, so many were they that none were ready, and Lincoln, who had been prompt, was forced to wait until Offutt undertook at least one of them. "He seemed to be loafing," the people of Salem said afterwards. However, the forced idleness went against his grain, and he was glad to find a day's work as clerk in a local election. When asked if he could write, he answered, "Yes, I can make a few rabbit tracks." When that job was over he took another as pilot down the Sangamon River, for a Dr Nelson who was going to Texas. Finally Offutt and his merchandise arrived. The first scheme was to open a general country "store," which was to sell everything from pins to tea. Lincoln soon had the doors of the shop opened, while Offutt, for whom this form of money-making was too slow, bought a mill up the river, and showed his appreciation of his young employé by placing the burden of this second venture also on his shoulders.

His neighbours were not much impressed with Offutt's stability of character. "He talked too much with his mouth," they said. He talked very much with his mouth (a fatal way of speaking in those parts) not only about his business, but about young Lincoln, whom he

truly admired. Not only did Abe know more than any other man in the United States, but he could beat any man in the county running, jumping or "wrestling." This latter assertion had to be proved. Lincoln was challenged by a gang of young bullies called the Clary Grove Boys, and the challenge was accepted. He would have liked to lie peaceably under a tree with his legs stuck up against the trunk reading a book, but Offutt's boast had to be made good. He nearly strangled the leader, Jack Armstrong, for which, as is the way with frontier honour, the Clary Grove Boys became his devoted admirers. Lincoln made amends for his treatment of Jack Armstrong in after years by saving his son from the gallows in a famous murder trial.

In Offutt's store he sold groceries to the women, and had the duty of throwing disturbing ruffians out upon the street. Without knowing it, he was gaining a position in his little world. His scuffle with Jack Armstrong brought him fame. A fellow as strong as that must be a good arbiter of right and wrong, they said. Besides, he knew books. He even knew grammar, for which he was wondered at and looked up to as a young scholar. He gained this knowledge by tramping several miles for a grammar and studying it with the aid of the village schoolmaster. But after this accomplishment was gained he was a little surprised and disappointed that "after all, there was not much to it."

And so he sat master of the village store, which was ever the clearing-house of ideas for the countryside. Though delicate questions of ethics might be broached,

the main topics discussed were politics and the immediate needs of the time. The driving idea then animating the new and virgin regions was the quick improvement of them so that they might speedily attain to their "manifest destiny." The history of America is made up of the history of speculation in land and transportation enterprises. The virgin country fired the imagination of the early settlers. A great city might be built in the wilderness! Had they the railways, were the rivers made navigable, were they to build canals, then streams of *people* would come. "Improvements" became the mystic word of the time. They were to attract "people" and help the West towards its great future.

Andrew Jackson was President and Jackson Democrats ruled the day, through whom for the first time the West made itself felt in the national polity. The question arose in Congress what was to be done with the surplus that lay in the Treasury, the money received from the land sales. The States cried, "Give it to us, so that we can make 'improvements,' or make the 'improvements' for us." Because democracy ruled, the States were given the money, and thus over \$37,000,000 was divided among them. With this encouragement a mad frenzy of speculation took hold of the State legislatures. Railroads and canals were laid out at almost every crossing, and money was borrowed from where no one knew, to be paid when no one knew. In harmony with this "democratic" legislation, the National Bank was destroyed by Jackson, and nearly six hundred State banks were chartered, which began generously to lend paper money. A period of legislation and banking, known in American history as "wild-cat," ensued. Fortunately

most of the plans for "improvements" went no further than paper orders. Nevertheless, the general indebtedness of the States and the banks was a matter of many millions before the experiment was over.

To be a clerk in the grocery store was to be as deeply engrossed in political thought as to be a member of the legislature. In fact the road from the store led straight thither. So we find Lincoln issuing in March 1832 an address to the people of Sangamon County, in which he offers himself as candidate for the next General Assembly, and if elected promises to carry out very important radical changes. It sounds very much like a recapitulation of the arguments around the stove in the store. The fertile district of Sangamon County needed better means of communication. A railroad would be serviceable, but too costly, probably \$290,000. A much cheaper plan, and almost as good, was to make the Sangamon River navigable. Lincoln stood, therefore, he said, for the improvement of the Sangamon River, knowing from experience that it could be made navigable "for at least one-half of all common years." Did he not last year, in the month of March, build a flat-boat and take her out successfully in the course of the spring? And since that time he had been concerned in the mill at New Salem. He knew the river could be made navigable. At present there was too much drifted timber in it. His plan was to change the course of the river entirely, build a dam, and send it over the prairie land, where it would not only meet no timber at all, "but its length would be shortened by half to the neighbouring city, Beardstown." Surely that would be cheaper than building railroads. There were also other needs which this young Solon thought



necessary to the welfare of the community; for instance, a law fixing the limits of usury, which, in the case of necessity, could be evaded, which showed he had the true Westerner's conception of his wealth, which, if it could not be turned into immediate cash, nevertheless was of such promise that great jugglings could be done with it. Also, he favoured the spread of education, and that subject, though not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, he considered after all the most important subject of all before the community. On the whole, not bad sentiments for a youth of twenty-two, and to be able to put, unschooled in letters as he was, this last sentence, " But if the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined," showed a feeling for phrases which does not come from the study of Kirkland's Grammar alone. The young pioneer was finding himself.

That the Sangamon River was navigable was soon to be proved. An enterprising pillar of society built a splendid " up-cabin steamer," which he called the *Talisman*, and which he promised to send up the river with produce as soon as the ice was broken. He asked for a group of young men to stand with long-handled axes as a reception committee, to cut away the overhanging branches from the bank, and so make place for the anchoring of the steamer. It was the great coming-of-age of New Salem. Reception committees were formed, meetings were held, and the poets wrote odes to the event. The towns along the Sangamon could no longer be called inland. They were ports!

Lincoln was not only a member of these committees,

but he was given the honour of piloting the *Talisman* up the river at a salary of forty dollars a month. What he did for Offutt in the meantime we do not know. The boat made four miles a day up the navigable Sangamon. Lincoln in after years described it as the boat "with a five-foot boiler and a nine-foot whistle, and every time the whistle blew the boat stopped." The boat in a few weeks went up in smoke at the docks in St Louis, and Lincoln returned to Offutt.

This man's stores were "winking out," to use Lincoln's phrase. He gave up his business in New Salem entirely, and Lincoln was thrown out upon the world again, his canvass for his elections not taking place until the early fall. In the meantime Illinois declared war against the Indian tribes on its Western border. It was a war with the Sac Indians, but called in American history the Black Hawk War, because of the chieftain, Black Hawk, who refused to abide by the so-called treaties with the whites by which he had ceded his land to them. The giving up of the land rankled. His daughter, Oquawka, lay buried in the very domain he had ceded; moreover, prophet and seer as the old man was, he was firmly convinced that land could not be sold. The treaties were frauds and forgeries, he said, and he crossed the line and tried to arouse the Sacs and the Foxes and the Winnebagoes and the Pottawatomies. He came back to the Rock River, which he had ceded away, to plant corn. This movement aroused the State, and an order for volunteers was given to drive the Indians back across the Mississippi. The response was general, for the live Indian was not looked upon with kindness on the frontier,

and Lincoln was among those who enlisted. To his gratification and honour the volunteers, who had the privilege of choosing their own captains, chose him as theirs.

The war was short and swift, the enlistment only for a few weeks. They went to discover the enemy, found him, and then let themselves be discovered in turn by him, much to the enemy's advantage, for several days. The volunteers ran and left the country to the pillage of the Indians. More volunteers were assembled, re-enlistments were taken, among which was Lincoln again, who this time went as a private in a peculiarly unmilitary organization called the Spy Battalion, which seemed to have all the privileges of a body of young schoolboys out on a picnic. This time the army, plus the Spy Battalion, left no chance for the red men at all. They found Black Hawk's camp on the Wisconsin River, and inflicted a signal defeat on the whole army, pursued its broken remnants, and brought on another battle called the battle of the Bad Axe, which in reality was a slaughter of the few remaining and discouraged Indians who were fighting an army in front and a great river behind.

Of this war, and the part Lincoln played in it, he himself has left a famous memorandum in a speech in Congress, which destroyed forever all attempts to throw military glory upon his head. It was the call of youth that sent him out into the war. It was also a young, zealous patriotism, a crude form of centring the welfare of the community around its immediate needs; but of militancy and of military discipline this Western youth was delightfully free. Let him describe it for himself:

“ Did you know, Mr Speaker, I am a military hero? In the days of the Black Hawk war I fought, bled and came away. I was not at Stillman’s defeat, but I was about as near it as General Cass was to Hull’s surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterwards. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break, but I bent my musket pretty badly on one occasion. If General Cass went in advance of me picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges on the wild onions. If he saw any live fighting Indians it was more than I did, but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and though I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry. If ever I should conclude to doff whatever our Democratic friends may suppose there is of black-cockade Federalism about me, and thereupon they shall take me up as their candidate for the Presidency, I protest that they shall not make fun of me, as they have of General Cass, by attempting to write me into a military hero.”

The new world lay open before the youth of twenty-two returned from the war. He had no position, no calling, no post. He had his brawny arms, and before him lay the primitive frontier town of New Salem, where he had been grocery clerk and mill overseer and pilot a few months before. Only one shred was left to him of that past. This was his candidature for the State Legislature. He had made his way back slowly from the scene of war, tramping on foot, for his horse was stolen, or paddling up the Illinois River. There was a serious practicality about him. He knew the value of money and economy. The comrades bought a little

canoe with which they paddled home, and carefully sold it again when its service was no longer needed. In this way, slowly, as if half fearing the sudden plunge into the world which he was about to take, he came back to New Salem, just ten days before the August elections.

His candidature had been almost forgotten; only a local newspaper, in giving the list of the candidates, remarked that Captain Lincoln "was now risking his life at the front." The gallant captain returned and threw himself into politics. Strange to say, the canvass did not daunt this youth of the backwoods. He had argued often enough when keeping store for Offutt, and stump-speaking was his forte even in the old days on the farm, where he would drop his plough in the cornfield to imitate a wandering preacher's sermon, or harangue in not too polite terms on any subject that the other hands called for. He knew how to speak, and he knew how to maintain his attitude as a speaker in this frontier canvass. The audience around the platform were not always docile. Sometimes they came because of the beer given, and not a few would show their disposition in true Clary Grove Boy fashion. At one time it was said that the young candidate saw in the midst of his argument a friend who was not being well handled by the crowd with whom he was holding a discussion aside, whereat Lincoln, descending from his rostrum, threw the enemy some ten feet, and returned, picking up his thread at the point where he had left off.

The youth had independence of thought as well as of action. The whole State was controlled by the Democrats—"whole-hog Jackson men" they called themselves

arrogantly. No one who was not true to the last letter of the Jackson policy, who did not "go the whole hog," could hope for election or office. Yet he announced himself as a Whig, an avowed Clay man. His principles were not national or broad, yet, local as they were, they rested upon a basis capable of expansion. He stood for what was then called the "American system," which meant the national bank, a high productive tariff and internal improvements. In all this there was a germ of nationalism, new in the West.

He was defeated, not because his principles were too radical for Democrat or Whig, for both Democrat and Whig were shouting the same slogan of internal improvements, for which Lincoln also came forward. That he preferred the improvement of the Sangamon River to the laying of railroads was not held up against him as advocating unorthodox policies. He was defeated because he was unknown, young, inexperienced, and because he had only ten days with which to canvass in a district of about one thousand miles. Where he was known, in New Salem, he received an almost unanimous vote, all but thirteen voting for him, and of the thirteen only three were directly against him, the other ten were abstainers. Gratifying results to a youth of twenty-two.

But it did not give him employment. He thought for a while of blacksmithing. He did not want to go back to the farm, and this was a trade which would keep him in the city, and for which his great strength seemed to fit him. But his experience with Offutt made it easier for him to turn to shopkeeping again. There was a grocery store owned by two brothers called Rowan

and James Herndon. They were selling out, and a man called Berry bought James's half, and Lincoln bought the other, though neither Lincoln nor Berry had money with which to buy anything. The exchange was made in the easy-going frontier fashion, with promissory notes. Neither Berry nor Lincoln were interested in the work, Berry preferring to drink and Lincoln to read. Affairs did not go well from the beginning, and to the minds of the firm it seemed necessary to recoup themselves by an extension of business. They bought another grocery store. This opportunity came when the Clary Grove Boys broke the windows and wrecked the store owned by a man called Radford. Radford, as he was gazing at the ruins, was hailed by a passer-by called Green, who, after the usual greeting, offered to buy him out for \$400. The hasty bargain completed, Green went to Lincoln, who, being in possession of a similar store, was in a position to know whether he had overpaid or done well. Lincoln assessed the goods and offered to buy it for \$600. All these transactions went on without any money being passed through the hands of any of the parties. Lincoln went off with a bill of sale and Green with a promissory note. An almost complete monopoly of the grocery business in New Salem did not help them to prosper, the one remaining store competing too skilfully. After a few months, in March, they took out a licence to sell liquor. That was the undoing of the business, for it placed temptation too close to Berry. He remained indoors and tiddled. They hired a clerk to sell the liquor, who said that when he came there were very little groceries, but whisky was sold over the counter at six cents a glass,

or even charged. Lincoln, to whom a passing immigrant had sold a barrel of rubbish in which he found a Blackstone, lay under a tree all day long, "grinding around with the shade," and studied law.

As the extension of business and the specialization in liquor did not help matters, Lincoln, in May, accepted an opportunity to increase his income. He was appointed postmaster. His duties were slight, for he carried the post in his hat, but no postmaster made better use of his opportunities. Not a newspaper came in but was faithfully read by him. It was a serious waking-up period in his life. He was studying the world, and he was delving into fundamental ideas. He read Volney and Paine. He became anti-religious, better to say, anti-creed.

It was the year 1833, and the age of reason was sending its last ripples into the uttermost end of the earth. Lincoln, who was born free of thought, free of convention and creed, as the young saplings that grew in the virgin forest, clung to reason and to what he could see and feel with his own senses. He had what the Yankee calls hard common sense. He had to see things for himself, as he had to do things for himself, for, unlike his old patron Offutt, he did not "talk with his mouth alone." No one waited upon anyone in this rude democracy of an undeveloped country. There was the right of private property, which might buy service. But such were the changing conditions that the new country made each one both master and workman combined. Lincoln would have been the practical reasoner had he never read Volney or Paine. But the influence of the writers was strong in the country which boasted of its democracy.



By the very nature of democracy it permits of no fixed church.

Lincoln, in those days of simple reasoning and study, always had upon himself the burden of making a living. The stores which were "winking out" only increased his need of money. The postmastership helped very little, and in May he was offered the position of Deputy Surveyor. He eagerly accepted it, walking ten miles to have an interview with Calhoun, who was Surveyor of the County, and through whom the position was received. Lincoln told him frankly that he knew nothing of surveying, but Calhoun, who needed men to help him, and who could get no better man, gave him six weeks in which to acquaint himself with the subject, lending him the books he needed. Lincoln went to his old friend, Menton Graham, the schoolmaster who had helped him once before in the study of grammar, and who now worked over the problems with him in Flint and Gibson's *Treatise on Surveying*. These two years would have been most profitable for him, with their many changes, were it not for the stores, which bound him each day tighter in the coil of an overwhelming debt.

Finally, early in the year 1834, the firm of Berry & Lincoln was sold to two brothers named Trent. The men proved irresponsible, and failing before their notes were due, disclaimed any intention of paying. Berry died, breaking the camel's back by drinking a little too much, and the whole debt fell upon Lincoln's shoulders. It seemed so voluminous to him that he always referred to it as the national debt. He used his salary as postmaster and surveyor to pay it off. Fourteen years

later, as Congressman, he was still sending part of his salary for this national debt of his.

The political venture of two years before encouraged him to make another effort. He was sure of the united support of the Whigs, and his personal influence, which had carried New Salem before, would now, better known as he was, bring him the support of many Democrats, and so he again ran for the State Legislature. This time, of the four men elected, Lincoln stood second. Somehow there was a personality to that tall, ungainly youth which seemed especially attractive to his own community. He fitted them; he seemed their most apt expression.

To the degree that the community loved him and had faith in him, there were to be found individuals who had the same love and faith. It seemed he could always turn to someone who would trust and help him in the material necessities of life. As he found the Herndon brothers to sell him all their stock on a promissory note, so he found a young friend called Smoot who gave him \$200, whereby he could buy himself a new suit of clothes and enter Vandalia, the capitol of Illinois, attired more in harmony with the dignity of his new office. His first session in the Legislature is more important as to the effect it had on his own development than on the mark he made in it himself. He was elected on the policies of internal improvement. The whole Legislature was pledged to that policy, and Lincoln joined with the rest in voting vast sums which they did not possess for improvements for imaginary cities and townships not yet laid out. He came back to New Salem in the spring of 1835, having laid the foundation

of friendships with men who were to bear an important part in the political history of the country, and with a broadened and enlightened outlook upon life. He was dealing truly with the facts of civilization. The split rails and the axe were now definitely laid aside.

## CHAPTER II

### ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

**I**T was at this period, after having reached out into the world, that romance entered his life. There were days when, as a lad in Gentryville, he had sat on the bank of a river with his schoolmate, Kate Roby, and told her how the earth revolved around the sun and the moon around the earth. But the hard pioneer life did not permit of tender scenes to come often. There was no time for it. On the other hand, his own nature and self-respect did not permit of frontier carousals. Intense as he was, his life was peculiarly free of romance, and of what is more commonly termed women. It was only at twenty-four that he had his first love; some say his one and only great love. His wife's relations, speaking after the death of both Lincoln and his wife, resent the talk of another romance than that which culminated in the marriage. So much is true for their side that there was no other definite engagement to marry than that one. But it seems indisputable that his soul went through the fire of some crisis at this period, that the man who came back from Vandalia was somehow different from the man who discussed politics around the stove in the country store, or umpired cock-fights or had tests of strength in moving chicken-houses or lifting barrels of whisky. That beauty of melancholy which characterized his later years, and which is so innately bound up with the portrait of the

man given to posterity, came to the surface at this time.

We have very few documents to guide us in this "saddest chapter in Mr Lincoln's life," to quote Hern-  
don. Even the descriptions of the young lady differ with the personal predilection of the writers. Sometimes she has blue eyes and golden hair, at other times her hair is auburn, and then again raven black tresses crown her head. Her name was Ann Rutledge and she was the daughter of the tavern-keeper with whom Lincoln boarded when he came back to New Salem. It seems she did not return his affection, being herself in love and about to be married to a young man named M'Namar. He had come to New Salem to make his fortune, and to help his parents, who had failed in business in New York. In New Salem he had taken the name of O'Neil, and thus disguised, he hoped to work quietly until that time when he could reclaim his family name. This he told Ann as he started back to New York when his plans for his family were about to be consummated. On the way to New York he fell ill and was detained a month. When he recovered he let his long silence be construed as a lack of interest in the girl, and instead of offering an explanation, he himself became more formal. When he arrived in New York he found his father dying. The long separation, and the stress of circumstances, caused a coldness between the lovers. Soon letters stopped entirely. In the meantime, Ann at home pined for the vanished O'Neil, whose story no one believed in New Salem, where it seemed patent to all that his was a plain case of desertion. He had loved and he had gone away. Lincoln

saw this tragedy played in the tavern where he lived, and pitied and comforted the girl, and fell in love in turn. Months passed, and as M'Namar did not return, Ann leaned more and more towards this new love which had come to her, until she half-promised Lincoln to be his wife when a year should have elapsed. But in August she died, whether of malaria or of a broken heart, haunted by her old love, it is impossible to tell. In the last hour of her life she called for Lincoln and sang to him.

The tragic end of his love affected him so much that his friends grew to fear for his reason. He himself said that at times his melancholy was so great that he did not dare carry a pocket-knife with him. "Here my heart lies buried," he said years later when passing her grave. Whether, had Ann Rutledge lived, she would have become the wife of Lincoln is a matter of great doubt, for not many weeks after her death M'Namar did return, bringing with him, as a vindication of his story, his widowed mother and his brothers and sisters. The impression that the death of Ann made upon Lincoln lasted all through his life. Her memory caused in him a melancholia and moodiness to which he gave vent in poetry. "O why should the spirit of mortal be proud," was a poem he quoted whenever he thought of her, as it was indissolubly mixed with his sentiments of renunciation and sadness which recurred often in his life.

Lincoln remained in New Salem studying law and acting as Deputy Surveyor. His one session in the State Legislature encouraged him to try for that office again, and accordingly, in the spring of 1836, he announced his candidature. It was before the day of

party conventions, and the aspirant did his own nominating, generally coming forth with a profession of faith. Lincoln came forward with the following letter:

“NEW SALEM, *June* 13, 1836.

“TO THE EDITOR OF *The Journal*,—In your paper of last Saturday I see a communication over the signature of ‘Many Voters,’ in which the candidates who are announced in *The Journal* are called upon to ‘show their hands.’ Agreed. Here’s mine:

“I go for all sharing the privileges of the Government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently, I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).

“If elected I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me.

“While acting as their representative I shall be governed by their will on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is; and upon all others I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interest. Whether elected or not, I go for distributing the proceeds of the sales of public lands to the several States to enable our State, in common with others, to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying the interest on it.

“If alive on the first Monday in November I shall vote for Hugh L. White for President.—Very respectfully,

“A. LINCOLN”

It was a frank, straightforward avowal of principles, democratic but not revolutionary. His upholding of Hugh L. White for President was merely a Whig protest against Jackson. The plan for universal suffrage, in

which he includes women, was never again repeated, perhaps for political reasons. There is no evidence that he recanted his conviction, but he seemed to find no occasion to use it again. We must deal with Lincoln always as a successful follower of thought rather than a leader.

The representation from Sangamon County had been increased from four to seven, and the canvass that year was doubly exciting. In Springfield the candidates had a joint debate, which lasted all day. The contestants often became angry and vituperant. Lincoln, who closed the debate, handled his subject so fairly that the day ended in peace and equanimity. In his encounters with his opponents he generally came off the better, because of his quiet manner, which helped his ready words to cut the deeper. An old man named Forquer, who had been a Whig but who had recently joined the Democratic party, and then had been appointed Registrar of the Land Office, made a strong attack upon Lincoln. He commenced by saying that the young man would have to "be taken down," and that he regretted that the task had devolved upon him. He thereupon went at him unmercifully, and Lincoln retaliated in a homely but telling fashion, using the fact that Forquer had built himself a frame house, one of the best in Springfield, and had erected a lightning-rod, which was the only one there as a weapon against him.

"The gentleman has seen fit to allude to my being a young man," he said, "but he forgets I am older in years than I am in the tricks of the politicians. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction, but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that I would change my politics for an office worth \$3000 a year



and then feel compelled to erect a lightning-rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God." The blow told.

Lincoln was elected in this campaign with a good majority over the rest. The Democrats were defeated for the first time, and the Whigs were in control, with a majority of over four hundred. The nine Whigs elected were all over six feet tall, and they were at once dubbed the "Long Nine." "We were not only noted," said one of them, "for our number and length, but for our combined influence." All the bad and objectionable laws passed at that session of the Legislature, and for many years afterwards, were charged to the management and influence of the "Long Nine." They almost became what is termed in American politics "a machine," by the introduction of the convention system, which the Democrats, with their strict party methods, had already adopted, but which were first used by the Whigs with the advent of the Long Nine. Lincoln served on the Committee on Finance, and he helped to further the mad internal improvement schemes in which Illinois indulged for several sessions more to come. The representatives from Sangamon County had been specially instructed by a mass convention of their constituents to vote for "a general system of internal improvements." Another convention of delegates from all the counties met at Vandalia and gave similar instructions to the members, specifying that "the system should be commensurate to the wants of the people." The Legislature, in compliance with the suggestion, laid plans to connect the extreme points of the State by 1200 miles of railroad. Rivers and streams of importance were to be

widened, deepened and made navigable. The Illinois River and Lake Michigan were to be connected by a canal, and thus the improvements made "commensurate with the wants of the people." A loan of \$12,000,000 was authorized. It was hoped that Illinois would soon become the "Empire State of the New World."

Lincoln, as member of the Long Nine and member of the Committee of Finance, had his share in this form of legislation. A more successful and astute piece of legislating was performed by the Long Nine in removing the capitol of Illinois from Vandalia to Springfield. Many other cities contested for the honour, but the bill for the removal to Springfield was entrusted to the management of Lincoln, and with his level-headed practicality he succeeded. The session closed with an interesting document from the pen of Lincoln, which was hardly noticed at that time.

It was a period of bargainings as far as the anti-slavery movement was concerned, and the Legislature had passed such stringent pro-slavery laws that it almost turned Illinois into a slave state. The latest resolutions were as follows:

"Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Illinois: That we highly disapprove of the formation of Abolition Societies and of the doctrines promulgated by them.

"That the right of property in slaves is sacred to the slave-holding States by the Federal Constitution, and that they cannot be deprived of that right without their consent.

"That the General Government cannot abolish slavery in the District of Columbia against the consent of the citizens of said District without a manifest breach of good faith."

Lincoln and another member of the Long Nine, Dan Stone, presented the following protest to the resolutions:

"Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

"They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power under the Constitution to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power under the Constitution to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of the District.

"The difference between these opinions and those contained in the above resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

"DAN STONE.

"A. LINCOLN.

*"Representatives from the County of Sangamon."*

The protest was not very bold, but unfortunately that was all that Lincoln himself could feel at the time. Slavery was founded on both injustice and bad policy, and yet the doctrine of abolition tended to increase the evil, an argument in which many indulged. In fact it is difficult at first glance to see the difference between the resolutions of the Legislature and the sentiments of Lincoln and Stone. It seems to be merely that of shading. The Long Nine returned to Springfield and were received with manifestations of joy. Since it was owing to their efforts that Springfield became a capitol, public

dinners and toasts were given to the returning legislators, and speeches were made on the subject of:

“ Abraham Lincoln: he has fulfilled the expectations of his friends and disappointed the hopes of his enemies”; and “ A. Lincoln, one of Nature’s noblemen.”

Lincoln decided to move to the city which so early recognized him. Whereat he put his belongings, which consisted mostly of law books and a few pieces of clothing, in his saddle-bags, and borrowing a horse, rode into the city, which he was not to leave except as President of the United States. He had engaged a bedstead from the only cabinet-maker in the village, and with his saddle-bags in hand walked into Joshua F. Speed’s store to ask the price of the necessaries for a single bed. Speed took a slate and pencil, and counting up, said it would be seventeen dollars. Lincoln answered in a melancholy voice, “ It is probably cheap enough, but I want to save that, cheap as it is. I have not the money to pay. But if you will credit me till Christmas, and my experiment here as a lawyer is a success, I will pay you then; if I fail in that, I will probably never pay you at all.”

Speed said as he looked at him, he thought he never had seen so gloomy and melancholy a face in all his life. However, he liked the face, and he offered to share with him his large double bed which stood in a room above the store. “ Where is the room? ” “ Upstairs,” was the answer. Lincoln took the saddle-bags on his arm, and without saying a word went upstairs, put them down on the floor, came down again, and with

his face beaming with pleasure and smiles, exclaimed, " Well, Speed, I've moved."

He was a " poor white " in a community where the " best families " with their priests and their dogs and their servants had already moved in. Springfield was taking on the splendours of its new social position. Nevertheless, the democracy of the frontier brought this poor young white in close friendship with one of the so-called " better families," and Stuart, whom he met in the Black Hawk War, and who was a cousin of the Mary Todd he was to marry five years later, now took him in as a partner in his law office. Lincoln acted as the junior member and kept the entries and accounts of the firm, a thing which he disliked doing very much, and which in later life he always left to his junior partner. Stuart was deeply absorbed in politics, and to Lincoln was left the responsibility of conducting the cases and managing most of the business.

Lincoln ate at the house of William Butler, who also had been a member of Congress but made Speed's store his headquarters. Here, as usual, politics, religion and other kindred subjects were discussed. It was here that men who afterwards figured so intimately in his political life—Stephen Douglas, Browning, Calhoun— assembled around the fireplace, and held long debates. Young Herndon, then fresh from college, was clerk there.

Lovejoy, the Abolitionist, was lynched in Alton, only a few miles away. The subject of slavery and abolition was again hot upon everyone's tongue. Herndon, nine years the junior of Lincoln, went over in the fire of his youth to the ranks of the Abolitionists. Later he became Lincoln's law partner, and for all the twenty years of

their partnership kept in close communication with Theodore Parker and the Abolitionists of New England. However seemingly conservative and practical Lincoln was on the negro question, his close friendship with an out-and-out Abolitionist makes it certain that his sentiments were for freedom, whatever he thought as to the means of attaining it.

The young men who met in the store formed a private club of their own, but a more public one, called the Young Men's Lyceum, was also frequented by the same group. It was before this Lyceum that Lincoln delivered an address called "The Perpetuation of our Free Institutions." The address was published in the *Sangamon Journal* and created quite a reputation for the young orator.

Meanwhile, Lincoln attended a special session of the Legislature in July 1837. It was called to save the Illinois banks from impending dissolution. The finances of the State were in a ruinous condition, and the Bank of the United States and the New York and Philadelphia banks had suspended specie payment. The Legislature, instead of abridging its finances, only extended the already colossal system. It was not until 1838, when Lincoln was again elected for the Legislature, that enthusiasm and zeal for internal improvements began to flag. They tried to bolster up the system, but soon the fact became apparent that they could get no more money, and the Legislature was close to the verge of repudiation.

With all Lincoln's seeming success in politics these first years in Springfield were years of suffering and maladjustment. Somehow he could not find peace

within himself, and he was in a continual quest for something that would bring him peace. Part of this restless searching took him into the field of love. But he had no overwhelming passion or any definite ideal for which to strive. As with everything else in life, he was experimenting and letting outside forces direct him. The result was that his questings in the field of love gave him no satisfaction. About a year after the death of Ann Rutledge it seems there was another lady whom circumstances threw into his life, or better, whom he permitted circumstance to throw into his life. She was a Miss Mary Owens. She was born in the same year as Lincoln himself, and he met her for the first time in 1833 when she had come from Kentucky to visit for a few weeks a sister in New Salem. Three years later Lincoln suggested to the sister, who was returning to Kentucky to pay her family a visit, that if she brought her sister Mary back with her he would marry her. The two sisters returned together, and Lincoln felt himself bound by this vague arrangement to live up to his promise of marriage. His own version of the matter, written in a letter to Mrs Browning after the close of the affair, gave a certain side-light to the part he played in this strange drama. However, this one letter, which the biographers display to show his exact feelings, could not possibly portray the many-sided emotions which must have come to him during the whole year in which this story unfolded. His letters to her are perhaps more of an index to his feelings than the last letter written to a friend after the pain of separation was well over, and peace had set in. It was because of the still lingering pain, perhaps, that he gave his humour so wide a range.

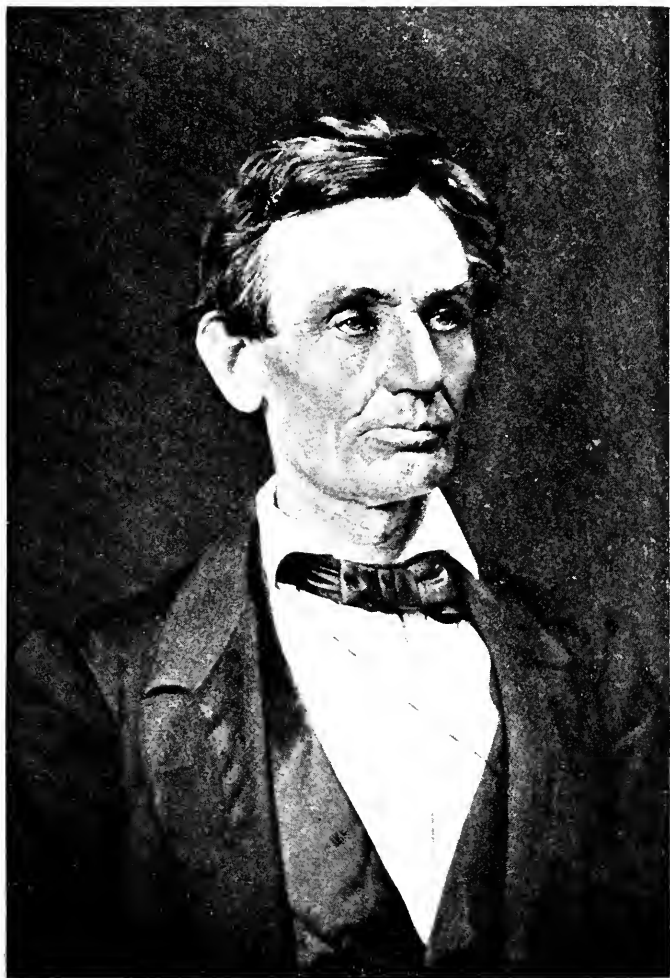
In his first letter to Miss Owens, from Vandalia, he speaks of going daily to the post-office for her letters, which seem never to arrive. "You see," he says, "I am mad about that old letter yet; I do not like to risk you again; I will try you once more anyhow." "You recollect," he says farther on, "I mentioned at the outset of this letter that I had been unwell; that is the fact, though I believe I am about well now. But that, with other things I cannot account for, have conspired and have gotten my spirit so low that I feel I would rather be in any place in the world than here. I really cannot endure the thought of staying here ten weeks. Write back as soon as you get this, and if possible say something that will please me. For really I have not been pleased since I left you."

At the adjournment of the Legislature he went back to Springfield, and it was here that unhappiness and doubt assailed him. It was an easy drive from Springfield to New Salem, and he could see Miss Owens often. However, when it came to the crucial task of proposing marriage, he did not seem to trust himself, and we find two strange letters of the lover, arguing his case against himself. The one is dated Springfield, 7th May 1837:

"FRIEND MARY,—I have commenced two letters to send you before this, both of which displeased me before I got half done, and so I tore them up. The first I thought wasn't serious enough, and the second was on the other extreme. I shall send this, turn out as it may.

"This thing of living in Springfield is rather a dull business after all—at least, it is so to me. I am quite as lonesome here as (I) ever was anywhere in my life. I have been spoken to by but one woman since I've been here, and





ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1860



should not have been by her if she could have avoided it. I've never been to church yet, and probably shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious I should not know how to behave myself. I am often thinking of what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would be your doom to see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently? Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine, should anyone ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented, and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me more unhappy than to fail in the effort. I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you.

"What you have said to me may have been in jest, or I may have misunderstood it. If so, then let it be forgotten; if otherwise, I much wish you would think seriously before you decide. For my part I have already decided. What I have said I will most positively abide by, provided you wish it. My opinion is you had better not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you imagine. I know you are capable of thinking correctly on any subject, and if you deliberate maturely upon this before you decide, then I am willing to abide by your decision.

"You must write me a good long letter after you get this. You have nothing else to do, and though it might not seem interesting to you after you have written it, it would be a good deal of company in this busy wilderness. Tell your sister I don't want to hear any more about selling out and moving. That gives me the hypo whenever I think of it.—  
Yours, etc.,  
LINCOLN "

He evidently succeeded in bringing the lady around

to his own view in the matter, for on 16th August we have again a strange letter which must have been an afterthought to a definite parting. He wants to let her go, and yet he cannot. The result is another half extension of the hand.

“FRIEND MARY,—You will no doubt think it rather strange that I should write you a letter on the same day on which we parted, and I can only account for it by supposing that seeing you lately makes me think of you more than usual, while at our late meeting we had but few expressions of thoughts. You must know that I cannot see you or think of you with entire indifference; and yet it may be that you are mistaken in regard to what my real feelings towards you are. If I knew you were not I should not trouble you with this letter. Perhaps any other man would know enough without further information, but I consider it my peculiar right to plead ignorance and your bounden duty to allow the plea.

“I want in all cases to do right; and most particularly so in all cases with women. I want, at this particular time, more than anything else, to do right with you, and if I knew it would be doing right, as I rather suspect it would, to let you alone, I would do it. And for the purpose of making the matter as plain as possible, I now say that you can now drop the subject, dismiss your thoughts (if you ever had any) from me forever, and leave this letter unanswered without calling forth one accusing murmur from me. And I will even go farther and say, that if it will add anything to your comfort or peace of mind to do so, it is my sincere wish that you should. Do not understand by this that I wish to cut your acquaintance. I mean no such thing. What I do wish is that our further acquaintance shall depend upon yourself. If such further acquaintance would contribute nothing to your happiness I am sure it would not to mine. If you feel yourself in any degree

bound to me, I am now willing to release you, provided you wish it; while, on the other hand, I am willing and even anxious to bind you faster if I can be convinced that it will in any considerable degree add to your happiness. This, indeed, is the whole question with me. Nothing would make me more miserable, nothing more unhappy, than to know you were so.

"In what I have now said, I think I cannot be misunderstood; and to make myself understood is the sole object of this letter.

"If it suits you best not to answer this—farewell—a long life and a merry one attend you. But if you conclude to write back, speak as plainly as I do. There can be neither harm nor danger in saying to me anything you think, just in the manner you think it. My respects to your sister.—Your friend,

LINCOLN "

Neither one of them is a love-letter. Yet Lincoln admitted that he was disappointed, and that he suffered at the outcome as if he were disappointed in love. At the same time he called it a scrape. He was in a scrape, and he got out of it. In his love, as in his politics, and in all his other walks of life, he seemed to have no definite ideal, no bright star to which youth so eagerly hitches his waggon. He early tempered and compromised with the realities about him. But his own personal conduct in all these fortuitous paths of his are somehow noble, and ended always as if he had begun idealistically. His letter to Mrs Browning at the close of this "scrape," as he calls it, with Miss Owens, maligns himself, and at the same time there is a hint here and there of the real feeling that lay behind it. He himself said about the letter, when asked if she should make it public twenty-five years later, that it had too much

truth for publication. The letter is dated Springfield, 1st April 1838:

“DEAR MADAM,—Without apologizing for being egotistical, I shall make the history of so much of my life as has elapsed since I saw you the subject of this letter. And, by the way, I now discover that, in order to give a full and intelligible account of the things I have done and suffered since I saw you, I shall necessarily have to relate some that happened before.

“It was, then, in the autumn of 1836 that a married lady of my acquaintance and who was a great friend of mine, being about to pay a visit to her father and other relatives residing in Kentucky, proposed to me that on her return she would bring a sister of hers with her on condition that I would engage to become her brother-in-law with all convenient dispatch. I, of course, accepted the proposal, for you know I could not have done otherwise, had I really been averse to it; but privately, between you and me, I was most confoundedly well pleased with the project. I had seen the said sister some three years before, thought her intelligent and agreeable, and saw no good objection to plodding through life hand-in-hand with her. Time passed on, the lady took the journey, and in due time returned, sister in company sure enough. This astonished me a little; for it appeared to me that her coming so readily showed that she was a trifle too willing; but, on reflection, it occurred to me that she might have been prevailed on by her married sister to come, without anything concerning me ever having been mentioned to her; and so I concluded that, if no other objection presented itself, I would consent to waive this. All this occurred to me on hearing of her arrival in the neighbourhood; for, be it remembered, I had not yet seen her, except about three years previous, as above mentioned. In a few days we had an interview; and, although I had seen her before, she did not look as my

imagination had pictured her. I knew she was over-size, but she now appeared a fair match for Falstaff. I knew she was called an 'old maid,' and I felt no doubt of the truth of at least half of the appellation; but now, when I beheld her, I could not for my life avoid thinking of my mother; and this, not from withered features, for her skin was too full of fat to permit of its contracting into wrinkles, but from her want of teeth, weather-beaten appearance in general, and from a kind of notion that ran in my head that nothing could have commenced at the size of infancy and reached her present bulk in less than thirty-five or forty years; and, in short, I was not at all pleased with her. But what could I do? I had told her sister that I would take her for better or for worse; and I made a point of honour and conscience in all things to stick to my word, especially if others had been induced to act on it, which in this case I had no doubt they had; for I was now fairly convinced that no other man on earth would have her, and hence the conclusion that they were bent on holding me to my bargain. 'Well,' thought I, 'I have said it, and, be the consequences what they may, it shall not be my fault if I fail to do it.' At once I determined to consider her my wife; and, this done, all my powers of discovery were put to work in search of perfections in her which might be fairly set off against her defects. I tried to imagine her handsome, which, but for her unfortunate corpulency, was actually true. Exclusive of this, no woman that I have ever seen has a finer face. I also tried to convince myself that the mind was much more to be valued than the person; and in this she was not inferior, as I could discover, to any with whom I had been acquainted.

"Shortly after this, without coming to any positive understanding with her, I set out for Vandalia, when and where you first saw me. During my stay there I had letters from her which did not change my opinion of either her intellect or her intention, but on the contrary confirmed it in both.

“ All this while, although I was fixed, ‘ firm as the surge-compelling rock,’ in my resolution, I found I was continually repenting the rashness which had led me to make it. Through life I have been in no bondage, either real or imaginary, from the thralldom of which I so much desired to be free. After my return home I saw nothing to change my opinions of her in any particular. She was the same, and so was I. I now spent my time in planning how I might get along through life after my contemplated change of circumstances should have taken place, and how I might procrastinate the evil day for a time, which I really dreaded as much, perhaps more, than an Irishman does the halter.

“ After all my suffering upon this deeply interesting subject, here I am, wholly, unexpectedly, completely out of the ‘ scrape ’; and now I want to know if you can guess how I got out of it—out, clear, in every sense of the term; no violation of word, honour, conscience. I don’t believe you can guess, and so I might as well tell you at once. As the lawyer says, it was done in the manner following, to wit: After I had delayed the matter as long as I thought I could in honour do (which, by the way, had brought me round into the last fall), I concluded I might as well bring it to a consummation without further delay; and so I mustered my resolution, and made the proposal to her direct; but shocking to relate, she answered ‘ No.’ At first I supposed she did it through an affectation of modesty, which I thought but ill became her under the peculiar circumstances of her case; but, on my renewal of the charge, I found that she repelled it with greater firmness than before. I tried it again and again, but with the same success, or rather with the same want of success.

“ I finally was forced to give it up; at which I very unexpectedly found myself mortified almost beyond endurance. I was mortified, it seemed to me, in a hundred different ways. My vanity was deeply wounded by the reflection that I had been too stupid to discover her intentions, and at



the same time never doubting that I understood them perfectly; and also, that she, whom I had taught myself to believe nobody else would have, had actually rejected me with all my fancied greatness. And, to cap the whole, I then for the first time began to suspect that I was really a little in love with her. But let it all go. I'll try to outlive it. Others have been made fools of by the girls; but this can never with truth be said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance, made a fool of myself. I have now come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying, and for this reason: I can never be satisfied with anyone who would be blockhead enough to have me.

“When you receive this, write me a long yarn about something to amuse me. Give my respects to Mr Browning.  
—Your sincere friend, A. LINCOLN”

However, the last phrase in the letter, “I have come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying,” was in no way seriously meant by Lincoln. He was thinking very much of marrying. It seemed to him a way out of his loneliness, and he went about trying to overcome it in a deliberate manner, not seeming to understand that the result would likely be to augment it for the rest of his life. And so he deliberately sought to lose himself in marriage. He found many objects of his affection, but to fix upon someone to marry, there his courage failed him. He wanted the abandonment of love, but could not abandon himself to it. Poor and homely as he was, brought up in sordidness, he sought beauty. He who had had so little culture, wanted culture. He thought his years were going from him, and he wanted youth. At the age of thirty-two we find him proposing to a young girl of sixteen.

Not much is known about this quest, for at this time the other principal in the drama of his life appeared. She was Mary Todd, a Kentucky belle of twenty-one, and a member of one of the "better families." Her sister was married to Ninian Edwards, who had been Lincoln's colleague in the Long Nine. She came to visit this sister in Springfield, and Lincoln met her and was attracted to her. Mrs Edwards said she often watched the courtship go on, he seated silent, gazing at her as if irresistibly drawn by some superior and unseen power, while she carried on the conversation. No doubt he was attracted to her for the position he had not; she had family behind her, she had traditions, she had education. She spoke French as fluently as English. She was a woman of the social world and he wanted to be in it. They became engaged to be married; but the old doubts assailed him, and at one point he wrote a letter definitely breaking his engagement.

She, in the meantime, was being courted by Stephen Douglas, who had already shown himself to be Lincoln's rival in another field — politics, which was to culminate in a rivalry that was to last through many years, and carry them into the very highest fields of political warfare. In these early days Douglas, the little giant, brilliant and self-assured, walked arm-in-arm with Mary Todd, passing Lincoln on the street, as he ostensibly paid his court to her. Here again there were conflicting versions: one, that Mary Todd encouraged Douglas only to spur on the attentions of Lincoln, whose ardour was flagging. Others, that she really loved Douglas, who, to all appearances, was truly better suited to her,

but that she did not feel free to accept him because of her engagement to Lincoln.

The effect of this play on Lincoln was not to spur him on in his attentions at all, but to make him think more seriously whether marriage between them was advisable, and whether he really loved her well enough. He came to the conclusion that he did not, and he wrote her a letter, setting her free. He took it to Speed's store and asked Speed to deliver it for him. Speed says he threw the letter into the fire and told him that if he had the courage of manhood to go and see the lady himself. It was not that Speed wanted Lincoln to marry, but he thought the personal visit would be better policy. "For words put in writing stand a living and eternal monument against you, while in a private conversation they are forgotten, misunderstood or unnoticed." Speed gave him advice as to his conduct. "Tell her, if you do not love her, the facts, and that you will not marry her," he said. "Be careful not to say too much, and then leave at your earliest opportunity."

Lincoln buttoned up his coat and went forth with a determined air to carry out his friend's advice. Speed waited for his return. Ten o'clock came, and still Lincoln had not returned. Finally, after eleven, Lincoln entered, and reported the result of his visit. He did as he was told, he said, but when he told her he did not love her she burst into tears, and almost springing from her chair and wringing her hands as if in agony said something about the deceiver himself being deceived. This was too much for him; he, too, began to cry, and he caught her in his arms and kissed her. And so, instead of breaking the engagement, Lincoln was "in again,"

as he expressed it. Douglas had now dropped out of the race, by the advice of her people, and the marriage of Lincoln and Mary Todd was fixed for the 1st of January 1841.

Again doubts assailed him and he was unable to carry out the contract. The wedding-day arrived, the preparations were made, the guests were assembled, the bride was dressed in her gown and veil, but the groom did not appear. What she felt, high-spirited and proud, can be imagined. What he felt is told by his friends. They found him at daybreak, wandering about, miserable, desperate, on the verge of suicide. They watched him in their rooms, day and night. Mrs Edwards and Mary gave the verdict that he was insane. He was sufficiently balanced mentally to attend the Legislature next day, but then depression seized him, and he absented himself for several weeks. On the 19th, Harden announced his illness in the House. Four days later he wrote to his partner, Stuart: "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were distributed to the whole human family there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better I cannot tell. I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible. I must die, or be better, as it appears to me. . . . I fear I shall be unable to attend to any business here, and a change of scene might hurt me. If I could be myself I would rather remain at home with Judge Logan. I can write no more."

Towards the end of the session he resumed his seat, but took no interest in the proceedings and only answered the roll calls. As soon as the session closed he went with his friend Speed on a visit to his family in

Kentucky, where Speed's mother, who seemed to be impressed with the tall, melancholy-looking friend her son brought, gave him a Bible to read and tried to comfort him. He was much depressed, says Speed, and at first contemplated suicide. He certainly wrote some lines to the *Sangamon Journal* under the title of "Suicide." When hunting through the files for these lines, after Lincoln's death, Herndon says he found they had been cut out, and he supposed that it was done by Lincoln, or by someone at his instigation.

In the Fall he returned to Springfield with Speed, who was going through the same experience that Lincoln had gone through six months earlier. He was to be married, and doubt and hesitancy overcame him. Lincoln, who evidently regretted his own lack of courage, now stepped in to try to prevent his friend from committing the blunders he had himself made. He argued with him, advised him, bore with him, and, what is most significant, always urged the point that he should marry and not run away. It was a telling conclusion.

A letter, dated 1st January 1842, showed his argument with himself as well as his argument with Speed. "I know," he says, "what the painful point with you at all times is when you are honest. It is an apprehension that you do not love her as you should. What nonsense. How came you to court her? Did you court her for her wealth? You say she had none. But you say you reasoned yourself into it. What do you mean by that? Was it not that you found yourself unable to reason yourself out of it? Did you not think and partly form the purpose of courting her the first time you ever saw her or heard of her? What had reason to do with

it at that early stage? There was nothing at that time for reason to work upon—whether she was merely able, sensible, or even of good character, you did not nor could then know, except perhaps you might infer the least from the company you found her in. . . . Say candidly, were not those heavenly black eyes the whole basis of all your reasoning on the subject? After you and I had once been at the residence, did you not go and take me all the way to Lexington and back for no other purpose but to get to see her again on your return on that evening and take a trip for that express object? What earthly consideration would you take to find her scouting and despising you and giving herself to another? But of this you need have no apprehension, and therefore you cannot bring it home to your feelings.”

Herndon says Lincoln was bringing home his own feelings at the time of Mary Todd's flirtation with Douglas, and so he continued to admonish and encourage Speed. He culled proof from every instance that fell in his path. Speed's betrothed had been ill, which was a cause of still greater depression to him. Lincoln wrote:

“ I hope and believe that your present anxiety about her health and her life must and will forever banish those horrid doubts which I know you sometimes felt as to truth of your affection for her. If they can once and forever be removed (and I almost feel a presentiment that the Almighty has sent your present affliction expressly for that object) surely nothing can come in their stead to fill their immeasurable measure of misery. . . .

“ It really appears to me that you yourself ought to re-

joy and not sorrow at this indubitable evidence of your undying affection for her. Why, Speed, if you did not love her, although you might not wish her death, you would most certainly be resigned to it. Perhaps this point is no longer a question with you, and my pertinacious dwelling upon it is a rude intrusion upon your feelings. If so you must pardon me. You know the hell I have suffered on that point and how tender I am upon it. You know I do not mean wrong. I have been quite clear of hypo since you left, even better than I was along in the Fall."

In February Speed was married, and Lincoln offered him his last counsel, for after that, as he himself put it, "you will be on ground that I have never occupied," and consequently might advise wrongly. His letter was still in the vein of encouragement for the plunge he himself had not dared to take:

"I do fondly hope, however, that you will never again need any comfort from abroad. . . . I incline to think it probable that your nerves will occasionally fail you for awhile; but once you get them firmly graded now, that trouble is over forever. If you went through the ceremony calmly, or even with sufficient composure not to excite alarm in any present, you are safe beyond question, and in two or three months, to say the most, will be the happiest of men."

After Speed's marriage Lincoln seemed very much relieved that the ordeal was over. Then a slight anxiety came to him lest Speed might after all be unhappy. He wrote him two letters in one day. The first was an acknowledgment of his marriage, the second was a little more intimate. Marriage, he said,

was a consummation, and could not see why there should be any unhappiness in it. "I feel somewhat jealous of both of you now," he says. "You will be so exclusively concerned for one another that I shall be entirely forgotten. . . . If you could but contemplate her (Speed's wife) through my imagination, it would appear ridiculous to me that anyone should for a moment be unhappy with her. My old father used to have a saying that if you made a bad bargain hug it all the tighter, and it occurs to me that if the bargain just closed can possibly be called a bad one, it is certainly the most pleasant one for applying that maxim to which my fancy can by any effort picture."

Having seen his friend safely across the rubicon, Lincoln fell back again into his old isolation. He suffered that he should have made Mary Todd suffer. He suffered also that he did not have abandon enough to throw himself into new happiness. Several weeks after Speed's marriage he writes:

"It cannot be told how it thrills me with joy to hear you say you are 'far happier than you ever expected to be.' That much I know is enough. I know you too well to suppose your expectations were not at least sometimes extravagant, and if the reality exceeds them all, I say, 'Enough, dear Lord.' I am not going beyond the truth when I tell you that the short space it took me to read your last letter gave me more pleasure than the total sum of all I have enjoyed since that fatal first of January 1841. Since then it seems to me I should have been entirely happy but for the never-absent idea that there is one still unhappy whom I have contributed to make so. That kills my soul. I cannot but reproach myself for even



wishing to be happy while she is otherwise. She accompanied a large party on the railroad cars to Jacksonville last Monday, and on her return spoke, so that I heard it, of having enjoyed the trip exceedingly. God be praised for that!"

Through the medium of friends Mary Todd and Lincoln were brought together again. Somehow the past held them, and the year of misery and strain seemed to drop out at the pull of it. The human need held them too, and they were again drifting into marriage with each other, though this time a little secretively, as if mistrusting the event. In July Lincoln wrote to Speed: "I must gain confidence in my own ability to keep my resolves when they are made. In that ability I once prided myself as the only chief gem of my character; that gem I lost, how and where you know too well. I have not regained it, and until I do I cannot trust myself in any matter of much importance. I believe now that had you understood my case at the time as well as I understood yours afterwards, by the aid you would have given me I should have sailed clear through. But that does not now afford me sufficient confidence to begin that or the like of that again."

It was evident, drift as he would into marriage, that he was on the horns of the dilemma of suffering without her and yet being unsatisfied with her. In October, a month before his own marriage, he wrote the last and most significant letter to Speed:

"But I began this letter not for what I have been writing, but to say something on that subject which you know to be

of such infinite solicitude to me. The immense sufferings you endured from the first days of September till the middle of February you never tried to conceal from me, and I well understood. You have now been the husband of a lovely woman nearly eight months. That you are happier now than the day you married her I well know, for without you could not be living. But I have your word for it, too, and the returning elasticity of spirits which is manifested in your letters. But I want to ask a close question: 'Are you in *feeling* as well as *judgment* glad you are married as you are?' From anybody but me this would be an impudent question, not to be tolerated, but I know you will pardon it in me. Please answer it quickly, as I am impatient to know."

That the answer was satisfactory, that Speed felt glad as well as judged himself to be, was manifest by the fact that Lincoln himself took heart, and appeared at the little quiet ceremony of his own marriage on 4th November 1842. The licence and the minister were procured on the same day as the marriage. The aristocratic tone to the wedding was given by the bride, who saw to it that the ceremony should be Episcopal. Marriages in Springfield at this time were simple, civil affairs, usually performed by a magistrate.

One of the guests, Thomas C. Brown, an old-timer of the Supreme Court, was heard to whisper, when Lincoln placed the ring on the bride's finger, repeating, "With this ring I thee endow with all my goods and chattels, lands and tenements,"—"God Almighty, Lincoln, the statute fixes all that!" This lack of reverence was perhaps better manifested by the groom himself, who, when dressing for the occasion at his friend Butler's

house, was asked by Butler's little son, "Where are you going?" "To hell, I suppose," was Lincoln's reply.

The reconciliation and marriage was interwoven with a romantic incident of a duel. Lincoln had written a satirical letter in the *Sangamon Journal*, dated from "Lost Townships," and signed "Rebecca," which lampooned the auditor, Shields, who was a Democrat, for demanding that the taxes be paid in silver instead of in State paper. Shields was outraged at the personal invectives and the satire, and threatened to fight. Mary Todd and a young friend, Julia Jayne, finding the letter from "Rebecca" so successful, wrote another, under the same name, suggesting that Shields marry "Rebecca" instead of fight. The girls then ended the controversy by a poem, which celebrated the marriage. Shields, now trebly outraged, asked who the author was, and when told it was Lincoln, challenged him to a duel. He accepted, and as duelling was forbidden by law in the State of Illinois, they went over into Missouri to fight it out. Lincoln, as the one challenged, had the right to choose the weapons, and he chose heavy broadswords and laid down the conditions. A plank of ten feet was to separate the combatants, which they were not to cross on pain of death. A line three feet wide was to be extended alongside of it, and in this oblong they were to fight. They met, the seconds were arranged, and then satisfactory explanations were offered, and the duel ended in a few written statements. Lincoln seems to have been rather in the wrong in this story, for his own letter was much more offensive than the young ladies', and he had initiated the attack. He never himself liked to refer to

the duel, and begged his friends never to mention it. Fortunately it did not come back very often to bother him much in politics, and only almost eighteen years after, at the time of his election for President in 1860, was it made to go the rounds with any effect.

## CHAPTER III

### CONGRESS

**A**FTER his marriage Lincoln lived with his wife in the Globe Tavern, kept by a Mrs Beck, paying four dollars a week for board. There, in August, their son, Robert Todd, was born. With this increase in the family Lincoln bought a house owned by a preacher, in which they lived up to the day he left Springfield for the White House. He had dissolved his partnership with Stuart in 1841, and had formed a new one with Stephen T. Logan, a former judge of the Circuit Court. Judge Logan was "a little weazened man, with a high, shrill voice, a keen, shrewd face, and a shock of yellow-white hair, picturesque in his old cape, and admittedly the best trial lawyer in the state." He was very different from Lincoln, the former being punctilious and formal, and loving money very much, while the latter was careless and knew principle better than technicalities. As for wealth, Lincoln regarded it simply as "a superfluity of things we don't need." They were both good Whigs and both ambitious in politics. A year after Lincoln's marriage, in 1843, the partnership was dissolved because of money difficulties, for Lincoln was not getting enough now that his needs were greater, and because of differences in temperament.

Herndon, who was ten years his junior, and who had studied law in the office of Logan & Lincoln, was now invited by Lincoln to become his partner, and the firm

of Lincoln & Herndon hung out its shingle on 20th September 1843. Lincoln, though no longer running for the State Legislature, a post too insignificant for him, was nevertheless still active in politics. In 1842 he was very eager to be sent to Congress. But here, for the first time, he was beaten in Convention on the ground that must have sounded strange to him indeed—his high-born connections. His wife was an Episcopalian, a Todd, an aristocrat, and he himself had once talked of fighting a duel. Also, because he was a Deist, a sceptic, and though advocating temperance he was not over-strict in the matter. The result was that he was nominated as a delegate on behalf of Baker, which he wrote to Speed was “a good deal like a fellow who is made groomsman to a man that has cut him out and is marrying his own dear gal.” Not Baker, but a man called Harden won the nomination, and as there seems to have been a tacit agreement that Harden, Baker, Lincoln and Logan should each be sent to Congress in turn, Lincoln reluctantly stood aside for Baker two years later, in 1844. It was not until 1846 that his own turn came.

Early in 1842, before his marriage, he had taken part in the Washingtonian movement which was organized to suppress the evils of intemperance. Lincoln spoke all over the State, and in many churches, but good as were his intentions, the result was only to outrage the more ardent crusaders. “In my judgment,” he said, “such of us who have never fallen victims have been spared more from the absence of appetite than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have. Indeed, I believe if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous

comparison with those of any other class." These sentiments were remembered against him in his canvass for the Congressional election. At the time they were expressed there were open comments of displeasure. "It is a shame," one man was heard to say, "that he should be permitted to abuse us so in the House of the Lord."

In 1844, though stepping aside in the Congressional nomination for Baker, he was nominated on the electoral ticket for Clay, and he canvassed the state, making very florid political speeches. He even went into Indiana and spoke at Gentryville, where he had spent his boyhood, and which he had not seen for twenty years. The new cry of "aristocrat" hurled against him worried him. He was in no way disposed to lose his friends of the type of the Clary Grove Boys. "As to my distinguished connections," he said, "that seems strange to me, for I do not remember of but one who ever came to see me, and while he was in town he was accused of stealing a Jew's harp." To his old friend Matheney he said: "Why, Jim, I am now and always shall be the same Abe Lincoln I was when you first saw me."

The return to the scene of his childhood threw him into a melancholy mood, and he expressed himself in two poems of sad quality. "That part of the country," he wrote, "is as unpoetical as any spot on earth; but still, seeing it and its objects and its inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of these feelings is poetry is quite another matter." The following stanza is sufficient to show the strain of his muse:

“ The friends I left that parting day,  
How changed as time has sped;  
Young childhood grown, strong manhood grey,  
And half of all are dead.”

In 1840 the oligarchy of the South was coming into its own. Though Harrison, a Whig, had been elected as President, he died the month after his inauguration, and the Vice-President, Tyler, who took office in his stead, showed himself more Democrat than Whig. He was eager to mark his administration with an event which would strengthen the South. For a decade the Southern slave-holders had overrun Texas with a hope that they could join it some day to the Southern States of America. During Jackson's administrations, and many times during Tyler's, ways and means were considered as to the annexation of Texas, and resolutions to annex Texas were passed in the House and defeated in the Senate, or *vice versa*. The cry had always been that Great Britain was intriguing to defeat the annexation of Texas so as to accomplish the abolition of slavery first in that region, and afterwards through the United States, “ a blow calamitous to this continent beyond description.” A letter of Jackson's was published with great effect, which said: “ Great Britain has already made treaties with Texas, and we know that far-seeing nation never omits a circumstance in her extensive intercourse with the world which can be turned to account in increasing her military resources. May she not enter into an alliance with Texas? And, reserving, as she doubtless will, the north-western boundary question as the cause of war



with us whenever she chooses to declare it, let her suppose that as an ally with Texas we are to fight her. Preparatory to such a movement she sends her 20,000 or 30,000 men to Texas, organizes them on the Sabine, where supplies and arms can be concentrated before we have even notice of her intentions, makes a lodgment on the Mississippi, excites the negroes to insurrection, the lower country falls, with it New Orleans, and a servile war rages through the whole South and West."

Such arguments finally brought the House around to adopting an annexation resolution, and Texas played its part in the nomination and elections of the Presidential candidates of 1844. Van Buren, who was the popular Democratic candidate, lost in Convention, because he was not for immediate annexation, and a "dark horse" candidate, Mr Polk, was nominated, who promised willingly to follow the behests of the South. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay, who for thirty years had stood as the bulwark of compromise between the North and South in American politics. Clay, in a letter, proclaimed himself against annexation, which aroused so much opposition from the Southern Whigs that a few weeks before election he wrote another, saying that, far from having any personal objection to the annexation of Texas, he would be glad to see it done. This lost him the Northern Whig vote.

A new party was formed at the time, the Liberty Party, which stood absolutely opposed to the annexation of Texas, on the ground that it would spread slavery in the United States. Their platform was radical as to property, and stood for equality in civic rights. The Northern Conscience-Whigs, so-called

because they were conscientiously opposed to slavery, went over to the Liberty Party. In the meantime Tyler consummated the annexation of Texas by immediately sending over a message to a Convention sitting in Austin, Texas, proposing to admit her into the United States. The Convention accepted the proposal, and a few weeks before Tyler's administration closed, Texas was admitted into the Union with all formal rights. The Presidential election, because of this split in the Northern ranks and the solidarity shown in the South, was a victory for Polk, who was pledged to carry on the principles begun by Tyler.

Lincoln at this crisis appeared merely as a Presidential elector for Clay, and showed himself to be a good partisan, but with no driving principle. The Liberty Party was outspoken, the Democratic was revolutionary in its cry of the manifest destiny of the United States, but oblivious to all moral principles, the Whig Party, about to split up, was resting its weight on personalities and losing ground with the people. Mr Clay, they said, was a great man and ought to be President. His election would have been the election of a popular hero, not the expression of a political principle. However, what seemed merely partisanship had beneath it a statesmanlike attitude towards the politics of the country, since for all its vagueness it was anti-sectional. It would have been perhaps the best immediate expression of the majority. It was this sense of Democratic majority rule which kept Lincoln a Whig, and was a clue to his public acts and thoughts. As a Democrat in principle Lincoln would work with the majority; as a moral entity he would first give him-

self the privilege of speaking his mind as to the morality of what this majority was doing. We can see this line of thinking carried out better two years later, when he was elected member of Congress.

Incidental to his own election to Congress he had as an opponent on the Democratic ticket the famous Methodist preacher, Peter Cartwright, who for seventy years had been a circuit preacher, very well known and popular in the West. He was a Protestant Friar Tuck, around whom had grown many bar-room and newspaper legends. Here again the cry of "aristocrat and atheist" was hurled against Lincoln, as it had been two years before when he tried to get the nomination for Congress. However, he laid his campaign plans shrewdly and well, and towards the end of the canvass, when a Democrat offered to give him a vote, he was able to say, "I have got the preacher and I don't want your vote."

Lincoln was elected by an overwhelming majority, one of the largest given in that district to a Congressional candidate between the years 1832 and 1852. He was the only Whig elected, and was called by them the "lone star of Illinois." The Lone Star, once in Congress, took a more radical position than his friends at home wished him to. The result of the annexation of Texas, as everyone had foreseen, was war. The resolutions committing the Government to annexation had with them clauses that were evidently a declaration of war against Mexico. No definite boundary line was stated, and the Government immediately acted upon the principle that the boundary was the Rio Grande, and that all the territory east of it was the rightful property

of Texas, which the United States was bound to defend by its military power. On the other hand, the annexation was especially irritating to the anti-slavery elements of the North, for the resolutions provided that four States could be formed out of the territory of Texas lying south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , with or without slavery, while all territory lying north, which touched the Missouri Compromise line, should be admitted without slavery. As Texas comprised no territory north of that line, the clause was considered insulting and derisive. The Polk Administration immediately sent troops to the frontier and actually ordered an attack upon Mexico.

In the first session of Congress in which Lincoln sat little went on but a discussion of the war. Lincoln voted to continue the supplies for it, since it had been begun, but prefaced his vote with a strong censure upon the Administration for having begun it by a speech called the "Spot resolutions," in which he demanded that Polk name the exact spot where he alleged the Mexicans had invaded American soil and shed American blood. For this he brought upon himself the censure of his own party and that of his friends. It seemed to them unpatriotic and impolitic. He tried to explain to them the difference between approving the war and voting supplies to the soldiers. The latter he thought was indispensable after the fact, but he could not help censuring the fact of the war. In writing to his friends in defence of his action he said: "I will stake my life that if you had been in my place you would have voted just as I did. Would you have voted what you felt and knew to be a lie? I know you would not.

Would you have gone out of the House, skulked the vote? I expect not. . . . Richardson's resolutions, introduced before I made any move or gave any vote upon the subject, made the direct question of the justice of the war; so that no man can be silent if he would. You are compelled to speak, and your only alternative is to tell the truth or tell a lie."

He was against the war as unconstitutional; but twenty years later he emancipated the slaves with as little regard for the Constitution as did Polk in commencing this Mexican war. "The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress," he insists, "was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons: kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This our convention understood to be the most oppressive of all kingly oppressions; and they resolved so to frame the Constitution that no man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us. But your view destroys the whole matter and places our President where kings have always stood."

Before the close of the war, when the probability of acquiring a large tract of land from Mexico became certain, the wrangle over the cause of the war ceased, and the question arose as to the form in which the new territory was to be admitted. Here the question of slavery jumped to the foreground again. As the whole war was prosecuted only for the extension of slavery, the North feared that the acquisition of new territory meant a still greater extension of slavery, and a proviso was brought in by Wilmot of Pennsylvania, which

said that an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the republic of Mexico to the United States was that "neither slavery nor voluntary servitude shall exist in any part of the said territory." The amendment was adopted and the Bill reported to the House. The Southern members, of course, made desperate efforts to kill the Bill, but they failed. However, it was sent to the Senate a few hours before the close of the session, and it lapsed without a vote.

When the war was really ended and the treaty of peace sent to the Senate, the subject took on new importance, and the Wilmot Proviso brought up again before the House no longer had the same success of the session before. The fight was kept up in the House in many forms during the entire session, and Lincoln used to say that he voted for the Wilmot Proviso about forty-two times. But if it ever gained any advantage in the House it was usually lost in the Senate, and no progress was made with the Proviso. The South was vigilant in regard to its institution of slavery. One man rose to censure the House because someone spoke of the institution of slavery as "peculiar." "Ours is the general system of the world," he said, "and the free system is the peculiar one." Another gentleman remarked that slavery was natural just as barbarism was natural, just as fig leaves and bear skins were a natural dress. It was the beginning of the new aggressive policy of the pro-slavery advocates.

Lincoln, before the close of the first session, made a peculiar stump-speech in Congress in favour of General Taylor, who was a member of the Whig Party, for the

Presidential election of 1848. Besides making this speech in Congress for Taylor he canvassed New England for him. Here, for the first time, the Lone Star of Illinois met the New England statesmen and politicians. He seems to have been very well received by the Whigs, but as again the Whigs had no platform, but based their campaign on personalities, his speeches were not very interesting. He attacked the newly-formed Free-Soil Party, the outgrowth of the Liberal Party. He did not see its significance, he could not see that before a generation should have waned it would blaze the way before him, and that in the Republican campaign of 1860 this party and not the Whigs, with whom he consorted now, would be his staff of support. In that future hour it was the New England Whigs who failed him, and it was the Free-Soil Party who gave their great vote to the Republican candidate of that year, who was to be no other than himself.

Lincoln's cautious, conservative friends had a more subduing effect on him than he knew. Except for his young law partner, Herndon, who was an ardent Abolitionist, he was surrounded by a conservative pro-slavery element, his wife and all her friends being Southern. He himself had the Southerner's distrust of the negro, though it was coupled with the Westerner's conception of democracy and justice. There was to be justice and democracy for the white man, and as for the negro, he was sorely puzzled about him. This much he knew, that slavery was unjust, and he went back to his second term of Congress and indulged in a little determined play of his own. He made no speeches on the popular questions of the hour, but

spent his time preparing a Bill for the gradual abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia. This was a measure which he knew would never have any immediate effect—in discussion it was generally laid on the table—and was really brought in by members who had nothing better to say. In his case, it might have been more as an answer to Herndon than as a hope that he was saying something which would distinguish him in Congress. The Bill was not very radical, providing as it did for a temporary system of apprenticeship and eventual emancipation of children born of slave mothers after 1st January 1850. Moreover, the Bill endorsed the return of fugitive slaves. It met with the usual results. It was blocked by the South and never came to a vote.

Lincoln, who had gone to Congress with his wife and two children, returned from his political exploits depressed and sad. He had not made his mark with his own party, and his hope lay in getting some honourable position in the Government as a reward for his faithful service in the Whig campaign for General Taylor. Taylor was elected, and Lincoln made a journey to Washington in the hope of getting the post of Commissioner-General of the Land Office, which he heard would be given to a citizen of his state. He was not successful, but the position of Governor or Secretary of Oregon was offered him instead. He himself considered it favourably, but Mrs Lincoln was opposed to going out to such far territory, and he declined the offer. He came back to Springfield with a consciousness of failure. He had not won the glory in politics he had hoped for, he was without money and without a



definite post. He fell back, at forty, to the profession of a country lawyer, retreating into himself from his own immediate circle as he retreated from the world at large. They were crisis years, years of wandering in the desert, of bitterness and maladjustment, and yet withal of growth and regeneration.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE CIRCUIT

WE come now to one of the strangest and most vital periods in Lincoln's life. It was a period of "crisis years," when, as Herndon put it, "the iron entered his soul." He had attained all that in the glamour of youth seemed worth struggling for. Learning, culture, position, all had come to him, forced to him by his own indomitable will from the most uncouth beginnings. At thirty-five he found himself no longer the pioneer farm-hand, but a leading member of one of the leading professions of the time, a returned member from Congress, and married into one of the most aristocratic families of the South. And having acquired family and worldly honour, satisfaction in them ceased, and a period of introspection and disillusionment set in. His career in Congress was not brilliant, and it left no mark on his future reputation, nor was it a help to any immediate step in his political career.

In the two years that he had been away in Washington his law practice had dropped from him, and when he came back he was diffident about accepting the same place he had held before with Herndon, who had in the meantime carried on the business of the firm. Herndon insisted that he resume his work as if he had not been away, and the two men worked together with a quiet understanding of each other. Lincoln was philosophical

and given to see both sides of a question. Herndon was strongly opinionated and on the slavery question stood for absolute abolition. They kept all the leading Abolition papers then printed, from Garrison's *Emancipator* to the latest speech of Wendell Phillips or Theodore Parker. Herndon's close communication with the Abolitionists of New England had a very marked effect upon Lincoln. It made him intellectually convinced against the further extension of slavery, and helped him later to make the break more definite with his Whig connections.

His life during these years was divided between a half year in Springfield, where he spent his day from early morning till late at night in his law office, and a half year on the Circuit, following what was called the eighth Judicial Court of Illinois, which comprised twenty counties. On these journeys, even when near Springfield, he did not go home for the week-end, preferring to stay around in the country inns reading and telling his stories for which legend has made him famous.

His office in Springfield was on the second floor of a brick building. It was a large room, which was afterwards divided into two, and it had windows overlooking stable roofs and dingy back-yards. It held two baize-covered tables, a few chairs, a cot, an old-fashioned secretary, and a bookcase containing about two hundred books. There was absolutely no method of book-keeping in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon. Lincoln carried his memoranda in his hat, as he did his letters when he was post-master. On one bundle of documents which littered his desk he had written: "When you can't find

it anywhere else, look in this." Now and then order came into this office, when a young clerk would take it upon himself to clean it up. One of the clerks, John H. Littlefield, said that once in cleaning up he found that a quantity of seed which Congress sends out for distribution to the farmers, had been left among a pile of Whig speeches and Abolition papers, and the seed had taken root and sprouted in the dirt.

As a lawyer it was said that he was excellent in grasping the basic principle of a case. But he was as faulty in technicalities as he was faulty in the mechanical work in his office. As to the latter, Herndon says he perhaps did less than any lawyer at the bar, leaving nearly all of it for him to do. Later they made use of the young students who came to study law with them.

In letter-writing he was as informal as in all things else, and even his business letters blossomed with his own personality. Writing about a matter of business to a friend in 1839, he said: "A damned hook-billed Yankee is here besetting me at every turn I take, saying that Robert Kenzie never received the \$80 to which he was entitled." In 1851 he wrote to one of his clients: "I have news from Ottawa that we win our case. As the Dutch justice said when he married folks, 'Now, where ish my hundred tollars!'" In apologizing for not answering a letter, he said: "First, I have been very busy in the United States Court. Second, when I received the letter I put it in my old hat, and buying a new one the next day, the old one was set aside, and so the letter was lost sight of for a time."

This same informality pervaded all his dealings in life. He ushered in a new law student in his office with this admonition: "I hope you will not become so enthusiastic in your studies of Blackstone and Kent as did two young men whom we had here. Do you see that spot over there?" he asked, pointing to a large ink-stain on the wall. "Well, one of these young men got so enthusiastic in his pursuit of legal lore that he fired an ink-stand at the other one's head, and that is the mark he made."

Another young student who was in his office was much more interested in military matters than in his law. But that did not disturb Lincoln at all. On the contrary, he was impressed with the fact that he was interested in something. "That young man has a real genius for war," he would say appreciatively.

Judge S. H. Treat described Lincoln's first appearance before him in court thus: "A case being called for hearing, Mr Lincoln stated that he appeared for the appellant, and was ready to proceed with the argument. He then said: 'This is the first case I have ever had in this court, and I have therefore examined it with great care. As the court will perceive by looking at the abstract of the record, the only question in the case is one of authority. I have not been able to find any authority to sustain my side of the case, but I have found several cases directly in point on the other side. I will now give these authorities to the court, and then submit the case.'"

Judge David Davis said of him that in all the elements that constituted a lawyer he had few equals.

He was great at *nisi prius* and before an appellate tribunal. His mind was logical and direct, and he did not indulge in extraneous discussion. When convinced of the right, whether the cause was great or small, he was usually successful. In 1866 the same Judge Davis had said: "Mr Lincoln had no managing faculty or organizing power. Hence a child could conform to the simple and technical rules, the means and the modes of getting at justice better than he. The law has its own rules, and a student could get at them or keep with them better than Lincoln." This seeming contradiction between the two statements was, however, true of Lincoln's nature.

He had a quiet familiarity in the court. "I reckon this will go in," he would say. Or, if ruled out, "I reckon I was wrong then." "However," said a fellow-lawyer, "if anyone thought Lincoln was simple, he would soon find himself on his back in a ditch. For Lincoln would only give in to six points for the sake of a seventh, upon which the whole case might rest." Davis said of him also that "when in a lawsuit he believed his client oppressed, as in the Wright case, he was hurtful in denunciation. When he attacked meanness, fraud or vice he was powerful, merciless in his castigation." The Wright case was a suit to compel a pension agent to refund a portion of the fee which he had withheld from the widow of a revolutionary soldier. Lincoln conducted the case free of charge, and even paid for the lodging and the fare of the widow. His notes for the case were as follows: "No contract; not professional services. Unreasonable charge. Money retained by Def't not given by Pl'ff. Revolutionary

war—describe Valley Forge privations—ice—soldiers' bleeding feet—Pl'ff's husband—Soldier leaving home for army—*Skin Def't.*—Close."

After describing in vivid figures the sufferings of the revolutionary soldiers at Valley Forge, as barefoot and bleeding they crept over the ice, he turned upon the defendant for fleecing the old woman, and literally did "skin him," sitting there, writhing under Lincoln's fire, a method still in use among country lawyers when desiring to impress a jury. Lincoln won the case.

On the Circuit Herndon says he drove an open buggy drawn by a horse, raw-boned and weird-looking like himself. He was dressed like an ordinary farmer or stock-raiser. His hat was brown and faded, with the nap rubbed off. He wore a grey shawl or a short loose cloak, which was the style prevalent during the Mexican War, and which he had bought in Washington in 1849. His trousers were invariably too short, and his coat and vest hung loosely on his gaunt frame. He carried a carpet bag, in which he kept his books and his change of linen, and an old faded green umbrella, with the knob gone from the handle, and tied together in the middle with a cord to keep it from flying open. Inside he had "A. Lincoln" sewn in large white cotton letters. He slept in a long, coarse yellow flannel shirt, which reached half-way between his knees and ankles. Attired thus, one of the young lawyers who first saw him said afterwards that he was the ungodliest figure he ever saw. Judge Davis said he never complained of his food or of his bed or lodging.

At one time he was presiding as judge in the absence of Davis, for whom he did that service often. The case brought before him was a sum of \$28 on a suit of clothes which a minor son had bought without the authority of his father. The suit was against the father, who was wealthy, and the argument rested upon whether the clothes were necessary and suited the condition of the son's life. Lincoln ruled against the plea of necessity. "I have rarely in my life," he said, "worn a suit of clothes costing \$28."

Of this life on the Circuit many vivid pictures have been left by his colleagues. The freedom and the isolation suited his temperament. Like all sad people, he could be gay and hilarious with his companions. There are pictures of his long gaunt figure stretched upon beds too short, his legs dangling over the foot-board, studying Euclid, or of his sitting up in bed talking to himself wild and incoherent nonsense, or sitting moodily half the night through before the fire, gazing into it as if in some sombre and gloomy spell. On the other hand, there are pictures of story-telling jousts of not too delicate a flavour, which continued half the night amidst roars of laughter.

His home life was even more isolated than his life on the Circuit. He could be seen occasionally walking to and fro on the sidewalk with a child in his arms, or pulling one in a little go-cart. Sometimes he would come furtively from the house very early in the morning, walking as if in deep thought, or in the evening go to a store to entertain the populace crowded around the stove. In the late afternoon he would go home to milk his cow, feed the horse, clean out the very humble stable



and chop wood. He was his own stable-boy, even beyond the time he was President-elect. There is a story of a neighbour hearing the blows of an axe very late in the night, and looking out he saw Lincoln, who had come home from a Circuit, chopping wood for his solitary supper.

In the rising values of land he never bought any and never speculated with it. His fees were modest, more modest than if he had practised in the town. He was invited to join a firm in Chicago, but refused, saying that he had a tendency to consumption, and that Circuit riding suited his health better than the confinement in a city office. But his fees on the Circuit were even smaller than the other lawyers demanded, and he was urged by his partner and by Judge Davis to raise them. This he would never do, and more than once he sent back a fee which his partner took, on the ground that it was exorbitant. There was only one large fee which he received. This was \$5000 from the Illinois Railroad, which to-day to a modern corporation lawyer would seem ludicrously small. After winning a case in the railway's favour the firm of Lincoln & Herndon asked for a fee of \$2000. A railway official, supposed to be the same McClellan who afterwards became Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Potomac, handed it back, saying that it was as much as Daniel Webster himself would have charged. Lincoln, stung by the retort, and egged on by his fellow-lawyers, brought in a suit for \$5000 and won it.

In another important case, in which he was paid well, he was hurt and offended by Edwin M. Stanton, later to become his Secretary of War. In 1857 Lincoln

was invited to Cincinnati by a Mr Manny, to defend him in an action brought by M'Cormick for infringement of the patent on his reaping-machine. The case was important, and several well-known lawyers were brought together. Lincoln was also sent for, and he had prepared himself to speak in the case, for his ambition was aroused. It was understood that he was to make the plea. Later, to his surprise, Edwin M. Stanton was also sent for, and Stanton immediately over-rode him. He practically took the case from his hands and made the coveted speech. To add to this injury, Stanton insulted him. Some say that he called Lincoln within his hearing "a gorilla from Illinois." At any rate, he told Herndon that he had been roughly handled by "that man Stanton," and that he had overheard the latter from an adjoining room, while the door was slightly ajar, ask of someone, "Where did that long-armed creature come from, and what can he expect to do in this case?" Stanton described him as "a long, lank creature from Illinois, wearing a dirty linen duster for a coat, on the back of which the perspiration had splotched wide stains that resembled a map of the Continent." This incident did not prevent Lincoln from making Stanton his Secretary of War when he thought the cause needed him.

There are stories upon stories of little intimate services which connect him with the "plain people," as he called them. His life upon the Circuit made him one of them, and he had so far shaken the home-life from his shoulders that he was gradually tending to that absolute break with conservatism which had tied him down in the early days. He made a return to his

own kind in middle life. It was this coming down to fundamentals which gave him the courage to join the new progressive party of 1854, which meant breaking with his friends and connections as well as with his party. The Clary Grove Boys became more important to him than his wife's lady friends. After saving from the gallows the son of his old friend, Jack Armstrong, who was being tried for murder, he could go back to his home and lie down on the floor in the passage-way, and if her friends called could go to the door and promise "to trot them out." Life was too serious for formalities. The horse-hair sofa, the six stiff horse-hair chairs, and the little centre table, with the gilded books, did not mean anything to him. He was no longer a poor white of Southern Illinois, hungering for the vain flourishes of social life. The pseudo-formalities of convention did not impress him. He was able to stand detached and aloof, and to generalize on the facts around him. Only once in these years did he come out before the public, and that was in 1852, to give a eulogy upon the life of Henry Clay, who had died. His biographers, Nicolay and Hay, refuse to mention the fact, for it was a signal failure. He could no longer do it. There was something wrong in the successes of Clay. Lincoln mentioned a long list of them, but he returned ever to the analysis of the social make-up around him. The South's insistence that the negro had "no right in the white man's charter of rights," that is in the Declaration of Independence, he called false and ludicrous. Even Lincoln, so anxious to speak for the will of the people, found that there was a moral right even above this will which had to be taken into account. It was

a fighting principle. Henceforward "right" and "wrong" are the words he uses with the monotonous beat of a sledge-hammer, but fortunately for his political life he saw little in the demands of those whom he called the "plain people" which clashed with that which he considered to be right and wrong.

## CHAPTER V

### "ANTI-NEBRASKA"

WHILE Lincoln was riding on the Circuit and drinking deeply of the inner wells of life, the country was passing through a crisis which was to culminate in a life-and-death struggle for its national integrity. They were years for the nation and for him of growing self-consciousness and knowledge, years also of strength. The Mexican War had brought with it a vast territory reaching from Texas to the Pacific Ocean, and the organization of that territory was to be the touchstone of the opposing forces in the Union. Whose was the power that would control?

The Wilmot Proviso, which had been before Congress even before the close of the war, had lost before the House. For two years the country wrangled over the subject of the organization of the new territories, and finally the great Compromise measures of 1850 were passed. California, which, as Mexican territory, was already free under the laws of the Mexican Republic, became fully populated in a few months by the gold rush of 1849, and no time was given to the United States to direct the policy of its settlement. In 1850 it became large enough to apply for admission into the Union as a state, and the inhabitants voted themselves in as free. They rejected the extension of the Missouri Compromise line, which would divide the state in half,

making the district north of 30° 36' free, and the district south of that line slave; and Congress, voting on Clay's Compromise measures, accepted California with its free constitution. The Compromise measures acted as all compromises do. They served to gird both sides for the battle to come. Though California was admitted as a free state, New Mexico and Utah were organized with no mention of slavery. Popular sovereignty held the day, and Congress was denied the right to legislate on the slavery question in the territories. The third clause, saying that the slave-trade should be abolished in the district of Columbia, was mitigated by giving ten million dollars to Texas, a slave state, and the passing of a stringent fugitive slave law. The North protested against this last law by various attempts at forcible rescuing of slaves, but on the whole it settled back, waiting for the next move from the aggressive South. It had won a victory in California, it had not lost positively in the rest of the Mexican territory.

The South, strong and virile as it was, had to act quickly to win here. The war, which had been begun in the hope of acquiring slave territory, ended perilously near for it in the acquisition of free territory, and raised the prestige of the Whig Party to such a degree that it won for itself the next Presidential election (1848). Whig generals displayed their valour in the battles of the war, and General Taylor, by his successes, won his way into office.

By 1852 the South had recouped its forces, and that year the election was a Democratic victory. For fear that the scheme for slavery in Mexican territory might fail entirely, the new President pledged himself

to follow the line of the “ manifest destiny of America,” and strenuous efforts were made to acquire Nicaragua and Cuba. The great hope was to force the administration to expand towards the South and thus outbalance Northern influence.

Inevitable as the coming war seemed to be, nevertheless the personal interests and actions of its leaders were great factors in shaping the course of its development. Stephen Douglas, the Democratic rival of Lincoln, was to have had the Democratic nomination for President in 1852 had his partisans been a little more tactful. Their attack on the “ Old Fogey ” element of the party, which was represented by Buchanan, was so bitter, that though it displaced Buchanan from the candidacy, his faction could not bring itself to give their votes to Douglas. For thirty ballots the Convention had stood for him as against the largest number of votes for the other candidates, and it took forty-nine ballots to agree upon a compromise candidate. Finally Franklin Pierce was nominated. Douglas, looking to the Presidential nomination of 1856, thought to ensure himself the South by a form of legislation which would be distinctly beneficial to it, and yet which on the face of it might also be pleasing to the West. He was Chairman of the Senatorial Committee on Territories, and his friend, Richardson, also of Illinois, was Chairman of the same Committee in the House. The time had come for organizing a section of the territory lying north of the Missouri Compromise line, that it might facilitate a passage-way to the Far West. On 2nd February 1853 Richardson brought in “ a Bill to organize the territory of Nebraska.” The only objection to it came

from some Southern members, on the ground that it entrenched upon Indian titles, and the suggestion was made that the Southern boundary be  $39^{\circ} 30'$  instead of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ .

One member asked why the Ordinance of 1787 which had dedicated the North-West territory to freedom, was not incorporated in the Bill. The answer was that this territory lay in the section designated by the Missouri Compromise as free, and that it was therefore understood to be free, and thus the Bill was passed. In the Senate, however, the Bill was laid on the table, the reasons against it being that it encroached on Indian titles.

When Congress met again in December 1853 a great change seemed to have taken place on the question of territorial organization. It was obvious that the Democratic caucuses in the meantime had come upon a distinct understanding on the question. The Southern Democrats insisted that the Constitution recognize the right in slaves, while the Northern Democrats, headed by Douglas, said that slavery was meant to be subject to local law, and that the people of a territory, like that of a state, could establish or prohibit it. They hoped to overcome this difference in the party by proposing that the territories be organized by a delegation of Congress, furnished with all the rights that Congress could give it. What these rights were should be determined by the courts. This was the first call to be made upon the courts for determining the meaning of the Constitution of the United States. It was the foreshadowing of the radical step that was taken for this very purpose by the courts in 1856, when it went out of its way in the Dred Scott decision to announce that the



theory of property in slaves was maintained by the Constitution.

As a result of these party deliberations Douglas brought in a second Nebraska Bill, which, though showing a more careful study of the subject than the first, was not materially different in purport. Suddenly a member from Kentucky, Dixon, a pro-slavery Whig, offered what was practically the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. His resolution seemed to fall like a thunderbolt in the House. The South was pleased, and in a few days the air became full with the word “repeal.” Douglas, to gain Southern favour, for the time was drawing near for another Presidential Convention, took it upon himself to bring this Bill before the House. Before taking this step he received an endorsement of it in writing from President Pierce, and thus fortified he passed the measure successfully through the House, and it was signed on 30th May 1854. The Repeal was gained on the ground that the Missouri Compromise was made null and void by the legislation of 1850, and also that it had been inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress. The Bill held a phrase which Bentham called “a stump speech injected into the belly of the Nebraska Bill.” This was that “it was the true intent and meaning of this Act not to legislate slavery into any territory or state, or to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution.”

While Congress made this gratuitous gift of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise to Southern interest,

the Administration itself was faithfully following its behests. Ten million dollars were paid to Mexico four or five months before the Repeal for 45,000 square miles of territory south of the Gila River of Arizona—territory most likely to be occupied by slavery.

The virtual promise that Congress would no longer of itself dedicate any more territory to freedom gave an added impulse to the South to acquire new territory, where by virtue of climate and situation slavery could be maintained. For this purpose Cuba was almost wrested from Spain, and expeditions were organized against Central America and for new territory on the Texan border. President Pierce went so far as to direct the American Minister to Great Britain (Buchanan, who later was nominated and elected President), and the Ministers to France and Spain, Moore and Soule, to meet and discuss how far the United States could venture in its attack on Cuba. The result was the "Ostend Manifesto" of 18th October 1854, which advised the United States to attempt to buy Cuba, and if Spain refused to sell, then to wrest it from her by force, on the ground that it would be disadvantageous to the United States to have it Africanized, as San Domingo had been.

The sudden display of power on the part of the South, coupled with the bold and arrogant repeal of the Missouri Compromise, alarmed the anti-slavery forces of the North. The battle was called needless in a territory unsuited for slavery by nature and dedicated to freedom by legislation lasting thirty years. The Free-Soil Party naturally led the agitation. They asked that all issues of the various parties be dropped

and a reorganization take place on the question of the Nebraska Bill, as the repeal legislation was called. This was rather difficult to do, because, though the whole South was for it, the North was not so decidedly against it. The two wings of the Democratic Party were kept together by the compromise that they would abide by the decision of the courts on the question of slavery, while the Whigs in the South were as distinctly pro-slavery as the Democrats, and the Whigs of the North did not like to associate themselves with a party which had the opprobrium of Abolitionist. They joined the Know-Nothings rather than go openly with the radical Free-Soilers.

However, the year of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a year of Congressional elections, and that the people of the North, despite party alignments, did stand together on the Nebraska Bill can be shown by the organization of the House of 1853-54, which had a Democratic majority of eighty-four, while the House of 1855-56, the members of which were elected on the Nebraska question, had a majority of one hundred and eight anti-Nebraska men, who, within a year, drew together under the name of Republican.

The apathy of the years fell from Lincoln as he saw the gauntlet thrown in the face of the North. It was fortuitous in his life that the sponsor of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the man who stood at the head of the Democratic forces and was recognized as the coming Presidential candidate, should be his old antagonist, Douglas, now senator from Illinois, and a party rival from his own district. It might have been his intimate knowledge of his opponent

that made him rouse himself on the question of the Repeal and take up the fight. He became an outspoken anti-Nebraska man and Douglas's direct opponent in the field.

The northern part of Illinois, which was peopled by the Yankees of New England, was anti-slavery, and when Douglas came to Chicago he was greeted with hoots and jeers, and was practically forced off the platform. But by the time he reached Southern Illinois he was greeted with open arms. In Springfield he received an ovation. Here the opposing forces, the few Whigs, waited for Lincoln to answer him. The State Agricultural Fair was going on, and Douglas spoke there on the 3rd of October. It was a laboured defence of his position, and he himself called upon Lincoln to reply. The next day Lincoln took the floor and spoke for four hours in the height and ardour of his spiritual regeneration. Douglas, who sat in the front row, often interrupted him, and there was a play of words between them and an acceptance on all sides of a Douglas-Lincoln equality. Herndon said that this anti-Nebraska speech of Lincoln's was the profoundest that he had made in his whole life. "He felt upon his soul the truths burn which he uttered, and all present felt that he was true to his own soul. He quivered with emotion, and the whole house was as still as death."

Lincoln, despite his wishes, for he could ill afford public life, was put up as candidate for the State Legislature, and his friends urged him to follow Douglas and continue the form of debate which he had begun in the State Fair. Lincoln went to Peoria on the 16th of

October, and there answered Douglas in a speech which he himself considered as the truest statement of his own principles, for he wrote it out and had it published as a campaign pamphlet. But Lincoln went no further than Peoria, for Douglas had suggested that they both cease canvassing and return home. Lincoln kept true to the compact, but Douglas spoke again at Princeton, where, he said, Owen Lovejoy, the brother of the Lovejoy who had been shot at Alton, “ heckled and nagged him into debate.” Lincoln, for all Douglas’s excuse, felt keenly that he had been tricked.

After his speech at the State Fair the Abolitionists were anxious to hail Lincoln as one of their own, and Lovejoy tried to get him to address them the same evening. Lincoln was in a quandary, for to attach himself to the Abolitionists meant certain political death, and to refuse was also dangerous at this crisis. Herndon, who was an Abolitionist, but who understood Lincoln’s political position, hastened to Lincoln and advised him “ to take his son Bob and drive somewhere into the country and stay there till the thing was over.” This Lincoln did, and he was saved committing himself on the subject for two years.

Meanwhile he was elected to the Legislature, but the Senatorial term of Shields, a Democrat, which was about to end, made him desirous of obtaining that place. As there was some legal doubt as to whether a member of the Legislature could run for the Senate, he resigned his position to make his canvass more sure. Unfortunately there was a change in the vote from Sangamon, and instead of a Whig victory the Senatorial electors were Democratic. Lincoln, though he held the highest

votes, could not get an electoral majority, and he urged his friends to transfer the vote for him to Trumbull, who, though a Democrat, was nevertheless an anti-Nebraska man.

The defeat threw him back again into Circuit riding and the practice of law, but it gave him two more years of reflection, in which, keenly interested in politics but not of them, he could watch the drift of events. The Repeal found him an anti-slavery Whig, as he was at the age of twenty-two; two years of the whirlwind that it sowed placed him definitely with the new alignment against slavery, the Republican Party.

Kansas, the southern territory opened by the Nebraska Bill, was giving proof of just how the people were to be left perfectly free to form and regulate their institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution! Organized movements were immediately set on foot from both sections of the country to gain control of it. The North rushed in Free-Soil settlers through its emigrant aid societies, and the South sent in hooligans from Missouri, and men who took the name of Border Ruffians, who, with pistol in hand, forced their ballots on the day of voting, or shot the Free-Soilers and destroyed their property in the hope that they would stop these elements from further emigration and settlement. Few *bona-fide* settlers entered from the South, for the state of affairs was too unstable for them to risk their valuable property in slaves. The result of these two movements was a civil war, the beginning of that greater Civil War which was to take place in five years! Battles raged between the settlers, at their voting

booths, in their legislatures, and in the execution of their laws.

By fraudulent voting a pro-slavery delegate was elected to Congress, and a pro-slavery Legislature and Council was formed, which, by adopting the whole revised statutes of Missouri, formed Kansas into a slave territory. Not satisfied with the black code of Missouri, they added one of their own, by a Bill entitled “ An Act to punish offences against slave property.” Death was the penalty for inciting the negroes to insurrection or for assisting in escape, ten years of prison for harbouring a slave, and two years for refraining to help in recapture. Besides this, the rights of free speech were violated by drastic laws against the publication or utterance of anti-slavery sentiments. Practically it meant that the reading of the Declaration of Independence, which begins with the statement that all men are created free and equal, would be considered a felony under the law. Finally, all officers of the State were required by oath to sustain the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Law. These laws were practically all put in through the manipulation of the citizens of Missouri.

The real settlers, on the other hand, who were “ Free State men,” formed a counter agitation called the Topeka Movement. They held their own elections, formed their own council, and elected their own member to Congress, the former Governor Reeder, who had been dismissed by the Administration for following out the principle of popular sovereignty a little too sincerely. Of course the Topeka Constitution received no support from the Pierce Administration or the Senate,

but it helped to bring the state of affairs in Kansas before the people at large. The delegates of the Topeka Constitution, who were to meet in July 1856, were dispersed by the Federal troops. The citizens of the Free State Party considered themselves in no way bound to what they called the "bogus legislature" of the pro-slavery minority, and for two years maintained a steady passive resistance to it and to its laws. They refused to take the oath, they paid no taxes, they did no voting. The city of Lawrence, which was formed by the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society, was naturally the centre of the Free State Party. Not content with dispersing the Topeka delegates by Federal troops, the Sheriff of Kansas, who was also a postmaster in Missouri, collected a posse of fifteen hundred men on the pretext of a resistance to arrest that had taken place in Lawrence, and surrounded the town for the purpose of demolishing it. The Lawrence settlers managed to procure for themselves a 12-inch gun, and besides were well armed with the dreaded Sharp rifles. In contradistinction to the bowie knife of the Border Ruffian, the Free State settler had brought with him a Yankee gun called a Sharp rifle, which shot ten times a minute at a distance of one thousand yards. The Pro-slavery Party had more respect for the Sharp rifle of the Free State man than for his principles of liberty and equality.

This Wakarusa War, as it was called, ended in a compromise, to the displeasure of both extreme pro-slavery partisans and Free State men. After this compromise most of the Free State leaders were put under arrest, and in May, U.S. Marshal Donaldson,



again under the pretext that Lawrence was insurrectionary, called together the militia, and entering the city, placed two cannon in front of the Free State Hotel and destroyed it. The rest of the day was given up to pillage, while the officers sat on their horses and watched the destruction. Reprisals soon followed, wherein the pro-slavery men suffered as much as the Free State settlers, with the result that the governor became seriously bent upon the establishment of order. The first step was to dismiss the troops. Finally, by threats of execution, they were disbanded, and quiet reigned for a while. In the meantime, Northern anti-slavery men rushed to Kansas with their Sharp rifles to help carry on the fight, and in a few months the voting population sprang from about 2000 to 5000. Within a year it was clear that Kansas, if left to the principle of popular sovereignty, would vote itself Free State. The climate, as well as the settlers, proved hostile to slavery.

The moderate Democrats in the country thought it best to maintain the equilibrium of power by acquiring some new slave state towards the South and permit Kansas to enter as free-soil. A new governor from Pennsylvania was sent to Kansas, who, acting upon that principle, concentrated his energies in keeping Kansas, not slave-soil, but Democratic. On his arrival the extreme pro-slavery men showed their disapproval of his policy by renewed violence, and the whole state was thrown into open warfare again. After several months he succeeded in disarming and disbanding the militia and the guerillas. In the year's fighting, as far as can be estimated, about two million dollars' worth of property was destroyed and two hundred lives lost.

It was this war in Kansas which at last caused Lincoln to break with his old opportunistic affiliations and come out boldly with the new party of principle. By 1856 he was ready to take his stand. The new party, called the Republican Party, in honour of Thomas Jefferson, who also had called himself republican, decided to organize all factions which were against the extension of slavery in the territories, or, in other words, all "anti-Nebraska men." Herndon drew up a paper for "Friends of Freedom" to sign, which called a County Convention in Springfield to select delegates to the forthcoming Republican State Convention in Bloomington. Herndon himself signed Lincoln's name to it. His old friends and his wife's relations rushed in, alarmed and shocked, to ask whether Lincoln himself could have taken so suicidal a stand. Herndon confessed that he alone had signed it, and he telegraphed Lincoln, asking if he had done well. Lincoln's answer was: "All right; go ahead; will meet you—radicals and all." And it was at the State Convention in Bloomington, which met on 29th May 1856, that Lincoln dedicated himself to the battle for which the new party had entered the lists. The night before, Governor Reeder, dismissed and disgraced, had told the story of "bleeding Kansas."

"Lincoln's speech in Bloomington," says Herndon, "was the grand effort of his life. Heretofore he had simply argued the slavery question on grounds of policy—the statesman's grounds, never reaching the question of the radical and the eternal right. Now he was newly baptized and freshly born. He had the fervour of a new convert, the smothered flame broke

out; enthusiasm unusual to him blazed up. His eyes were aglow with an inspiration. He felt justice. His heart was alive to the right. His sympathies, remarkably deep for him, burst forth, and he stood before the throne of the eternal right.”

Unfortunately, Lincoln's speech was never written out or printed. A mass meeting in Springfield, called by Lincoln and Herndon to ratify the Bloomington Convention, was attended by one other man, for the home-town of the future “Saviour of his Country” was far from seeking the “eternal right.”

The new convert took his old position of Presidential elector, this time for the most radical candidate in the field, Fremont, the first Presidential candidate of the Republican Party. The nominating Convention had taken place in Philadelphia, where Lincoln himself received 110 votes for Vice-President, an evidence that he was already considered a strong card politically. In his canvass for the new candidate he spoke not only in the State of Illinois, but in most of the states of the North-West.

The maelstrom of events was soon to carry him quick and far.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DEBATES

WHILE Lincoln had quietly and unassumingly joined the one group which stood united to fight politically against the further extension of slavery, the practical politician in him revolted against the strengthening of the forces of an enemy because of divided opposition in his own ranks. The Know-Nothings had nominated Fillmore, and the remnants of the fast disintegrating Whig Party had endorsed him. "All of us who did not vote for Mr Buchanan, taken together," he said at a Republican banquet of that year, 1856, in Chicago, "are a majority of four hundred thousand. But in the late contest we were divided between Fremont and Fillmore. Can we not come together for the future?"

He had promised himself that "in his humble sphere" he would "advocate the restoration of the Missouri Compromise so long as Kansas remained a territory, and when by all these foul means it seeks to come into the Union as a slave state," he would oppose it. Limited as this battleground seemed, he was soon to execute one of the most astute manœuvres which, in the election of 1860, was to unite his own forces and divide the enemy, instead of presenting a divided opposition as they did in 1856.

Douglas, who had fought the "Old Fogey" element in his own party, to his detriment in the nominations

of 1852, had hoped to retrieve himself before the united Democracy in 1856 by his free gift to the South of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise. But the "Old Fogey" elements were not to be bribed, and the Southern extremists accepted the gift, but went to allies who did not mince words with vague theories of popular sovereignty. The very "Old Fogeys" he had scorned four years earlier were nominated in the Democratic Convention of 1856. Douglas again lost in Convention, and James Buchanan, one of the authors of the Ostend Manifesto, and who spoke plainly of "State equality" instead of the old republican ideas of popular equality, was nominated in his stead.

The South had chosen well. Buchanan's inauguration brought with it the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court, which confirmed by the highest tribunal in the land the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Dred Scott was a negro belonging to an army surgeon, who had taken him from Missouri to Illinois, and thence to Minnesota. When he was brought back to Missouri he sued for his freedom on the ground that his residence in a free state had operated to make him free. The lower courts of Missouri had denied the plea, and in the course of appeal it reached the Supreme Court of the United States. This Court sustained the other decision, which would have raised little opposition were it not accompanied by a majority report written by the Chief Justice himself, which said that though the Constitution spoke of slaves as *persons* held to service and labour, it did not really consider men of African race as *persons*, but as *property*, in view of the fact that they were already in bondage when the Republic was formed,

and that the guarantees of property in the Constitution itself prevented any legislation which might disturb them from that state, and that Congress had no more right to exclude property in slaves from the territories than it had a right to exclude any other form of property; that therefore the Missouri Legislation of 1820 was unconstitutional, and in the opinion of the Court null and void.

The outrage felt in the North at this virtual nationalization of slavery was being augmented by the flagrant abuse of influence that the Administration was using to force Kansas into becoming a slave state. The struggle in Kansas was now spreading to the floor of Congress. Buchanan had sent out a new governor who was pledged to permit a ratification by a popular vote of the State Constitution to be written by a new Legislature. Election frauds were again perpetrated at the polling of delegates for the Legislature, and the Governor, Walker, refused to ratify delegates thus elected. From one district, Oxford, which contained six hundred houses, a list of over two thousand names was sent in, which was afterwards found to be copied from an old directory of Cincinnati. Nevertheless, in spite of Governor Walker's efforts for legality, the trick methods succeeded and a pro-slavery Legislature was convened in Lecompton. It issued a Constitution which affirmed the right of property in slaves. Instead of sending it to the people for ratification, they were only offered the vote of Constitution *with slavery* or the Constitution *without slavery*. In either case they had to vote for the Constitution which embodied slavery. The Free State men refused to be tricked and boycotted the elections.

The Governor upheld them, and a new election was held, in which they voted for or against this Lecompton Constitution, as he had promised. This time the pro-slavery elements abstained from voting, but the Free State men voted solidly against it, showing a strength of over ten thousand votes. Even had all the Missourians voted at this election they could not have forced the Constitution upon the State, for in their former ballots they only polled six thousand votes.

The question now came up before the House and the Administration as to which ratification was to be recognized. Buchanan and the Senate supported the Lecompton Constitution; the House of Representatives rejected it. It became clear that the moment had come when the people at large as well as the people of Kansas would call a halt to the aggressive policy of the pro-slavery elements. The South then withdrew with the best grace it could under cover of the so-called English Bill. This Bill provided for a popular vote on the question of the Lecompton Constitution, but with the proviso that if it be accepted all the lands requested by that Constitution be granted and immediate statehood conferred. If not, Kansas was to remain a territory until her population reached the ratio of representation required for a member of the House. Though the Free State men of the time cried that they were being bribed and threatened, nevertheless it was understood by all that the Bill was a surrender to them, and at the polls Kansas again unanimously rejected the Lecompton Constitution and the proposition. However, barely four years later, amid the panic of a fast-consummating disunion, Kansas was quietly and without comment

admitted into the Union. The Congress that accepted her in January 1861 was already republican—made so by the withdrawal of the members of the South.

The Lecompton Constitution might have been forced upon the people of Kansas had the Democratic Party shown as much unity as it did in the Repeal Legislation of three years before. Douglas found that the Kansas-Nebraska Bill only played into the hands of the extreme South, and without gaining for him the Southern vote it was losing ground for him in the North. His constituency had already revoked their support from his Senatorial colleague in 1852, and from the Democratic governor in 1856. He decided to rehabilitate himself with his Illinois constituents, and he openly broke with the Administration over the Lecompton Constitution. The rights of popular sovereignty were being violated by undue and fraudulent influence, and he denounced the Constitution before Buchanan and in the Senate. As a rebuke he was removed from the Chairmanship of the Territorial Committee, which he had held for eleven years. On the other hand, his action came perilously near winning for himself the sympathy and the alliance of the more opportunistic Republicans of the North. A Senatorial election was about to be held in Illinois, and there was a distinct feeling among the Republicans of the East that that party should support him. But the Republicans of Illinois were wary of so shifty a candidate. They did not want fusion. Herndon took a trip through the East to espouse the cause of Lincoln and to sound the politicians on the Douglas question, and he found them pretty much agreed that it were wiser to accept him.



Greeley, who was editor of the *New York Tribune*, and whose political influence was large, was very certain that the Illinois Republicans would make a mistake if they did not accept Douglas.

However, Illinois was unanimous in its distrust of him, and at the State Convention in Springfield a banner appeared with the words, "Cook County for Abraham Lincoln as their one and only choice for Senator." The Convention with one accord voted that "Illinois should be nailed over the name of Cook County." This peculiar form of direct nomination was due to the fear of a later coalition with Douglas.

Greeley looked on displeased at the action of the Republican wing in Illinois. He thought it foolish to oppose a man who would lead to certain victory. Lincoln was hurt by this. "Greeley is not treating me right," he said one day to Herndon. He was worried over this sudden shifting in politics. "How can Douglas oppose the advances of slavery?" he asked. "He does not care a thing about it."

Douglas was nominated by the Democrats for Senator from Illinois, and Lincoln in contesting that place with him shrewdly decided to place the issues in such a way as to make him an impossible candidate for the South, as well as an impossible candidate for the North two years later in the Presidential elections of 1860. As he wrote after the race: "Douglas had the ingenuity to be supported in the late contest both as the best means to break down and to uphold the slave interest." Lincoln's memorable and significant task was so to hedge Douglas by direct open questions that he would of necessity force the Democratic Party in half. When

urged by his own friends not to press the points too hard, for Illinois was about equally divided on the real issue of slavery, and a too-outspoken attack might mean defeat, he answered: "I am killing a larger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." He did not think then that he was preparing the ground for his own nomination, but that he was preparing the ground for the success of his own party, that is certain. To him must be given the credit and not to the Republican Party leaders of the East that the Republican Party had an uncompromising slate in 1860, that the Democratic Party was shorn of a leader, and that, divided, it fell before the Republican cohorts. It was in these debates that took place in the Senatorial contest of 1858 in Illinois that Lincoln ploughed the ground for the political harvests that were to follow.

Lincoln, in accepting his nomination as Senatorial candidate, read a carefully-prepared speech which he had written weeks before and had read to his friends. All but Herndon were displeased with it. They did not see the political value of being outspoken and uncompromising with an opponent whose great *forte* lay in straddling. They objected especially to the phrase which spoke of an irrepressible conflict between the North and the South, for it sounded to them like a Northern attack, an impression the politicians were especially anxious to avoid. Speaking upon the policy inaugurated by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he said that that policy, far from putting an end to the slavery agitation, only increased it. This agitation, in his opinion, "will not cease until a crisis shall have reached and passed. A house divided against itself

cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall. But I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will be all one thing or all the other.”

Lincoln's friends remarked that it was “a damn fool utterance,” but he would not change a word of it. “I would rather be defeated with this expression in the speech,” he said, “and uphold and discuss it before the people, than be victorious without it.” Again, after more objections, he reiterated: “If it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to the truth: let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right.” He might have added, as he did before, “It was good strategy as well.”

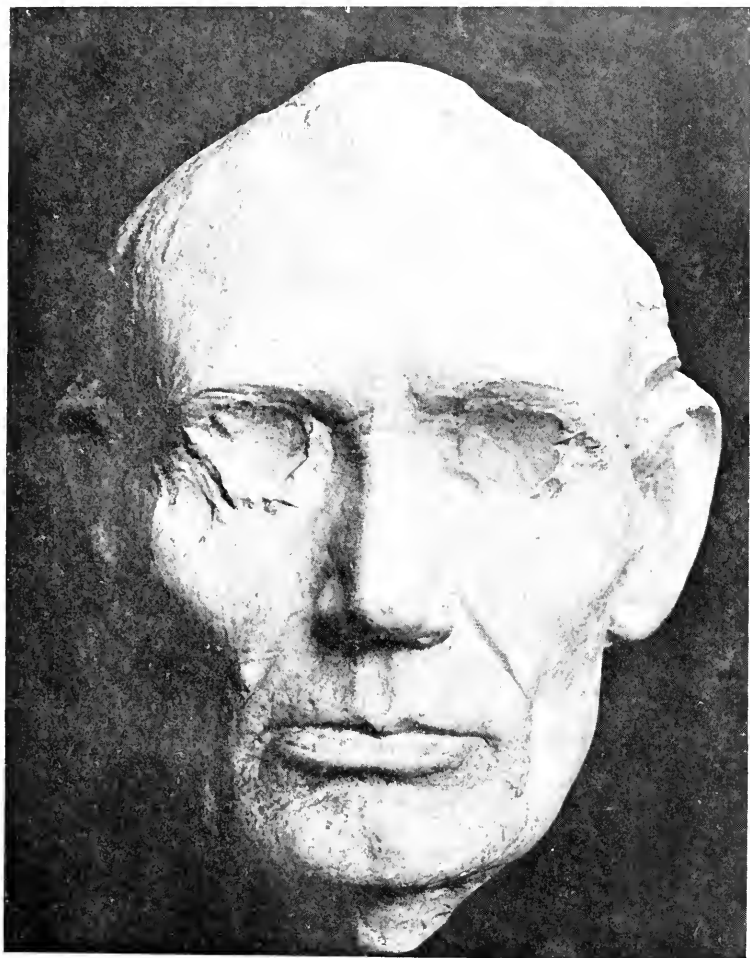
Lincoln's plan of campaign was to follow in the footsteps of Douglas, “the little giant,” and attack his position. Thus, when Douglas spoke in Chicago on the 9th of July, Lincoln, following him, replied the next evening from the balcony of the same hotel. Douglas, who had been received by a military escort, had entered the city amidst the booming of cannon and the fluttering of flags. Lincoln, though he entered more quietly, was received with as many lusty cheers as was Douglas, and by his manner of attack it was soon evident that Douglas, who had tried to defend popular sovereignty, coupled with the Dred Scott decision, would soon have to appeal from the Supreme Court to the voters of Illinois.

“The Democrats,” Lincoln said, “with their

thunderings of cannon, their marching and music, their fizzlegigs and fireworks," were trying to carry the State by brute force. Lincoln followed up with logic. The Illinois Central Railroad was on Douglas's side, and he was given a special train, to which was attached a platform car bearing a 12-lb. cannon to fire salutes. In this style he made his canvass, while Lincoln was side-tracked in freight cars, or was forced to sit up all night in stations, only to find the trains crowded and no seat for him. Nevertheless, Lincoln kept on following the hero of popular sovereignty, who, as was to be expected, did not relish this kind of electioneering.

On the 24th Lincoln went one step farther in his aggressions and sent him a challenge for a series of joint debates. Douglas, though loath to accept, for "I shall have my hands full," he said in private, finally consented to it. He declined to divide all his time with him, but agreed to hold seven debates, all but two to be in the central part of the state, where the real battle was to be fought. To Douglas was left the selection of the places, and he chose Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesborough, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy and Alton; two debates in August, two in September, and three in October.

It was one of the most exciting canvasses in the history of Illinois, and by the time the first debate was to be held the whole state was aglow with mass meetings and stump speeches, which were not without their free fights and brawls. Ottawa, the scene of the first debate, looked like a midsummer fair. For two days men, women and children came pouring into the town in hay-carts, buggies and market wagons. Even the



LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1861



prairie schooner came forward, for the Westerner, used to camp meetings and excursions and visits that take a week at a time, prepared in like fashion for the debate. By noon the special trains arrived with the two debaters, and the followers of each combatant held processions, the one for Douglas being a mile long. Lincoln was driven to the scene in a gaily-decorated carriage led by a band carrying banners, some with guileless inscriptions which read, "Abe, the Giant-Killer," or "Edgar County for the Tall Sucker."

The debaters needed no introduction, and Douglas, who opened the debate, struck immediately at the vulnerable point of the Republican Party. He accused it of being revolutionary and sectional. The Westerner had no love for the Negro; he was not opposed to slavery in the old states, he did not want what he called the sacred rights of property to be violated by Abolitionism, or to share his land with free Negroes; he only wanted slavery to be excluded from the territories so that he could have the land himself. He wanted free homesteads and internal improvements. To say that the Republicans were black, meaning that they stood for political or social equality for the Negro, was a potent argument against it. Douglas used this manner of attack and Lincoln spent hours repudiating the charges. To an Abolitionist listening to the arguments of both men it was hard to choose between the two. Both denied that they would disturb slavery in the states, that they meant to attack the Southerners' rights to slaves, or that they would desire to see citizenship or social equality given to the Negro. But there was enough political difference between them to wreck the one party

and bring the other into power. No other documents or State papers are as important in giving the exact meaning of the issues involved at the time, and of Lincoln's position on the questions, as these speeches and debates.

Douglas had declared that he cared not whether "slavery was voted up or voted down" as long as the principles of popular sovereignty were maintained.

The Westerner and the Southerner cared very much whether slavery was voted into the free territories or not, each seeking a diametrically-opposed result. Lincoln insisted that he considered slavery a moral wrong, and that "though there is a physical difference between the two (the white and the black races) which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality . . . notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Lincoln reaffirmed his statement that a house divided against itself cannot stand. It did not mean a war upon the South, he said; it meant only a return to the principle upon which this government was founded, that slavery was to be ultimately extinguished. This was the meaning of the framers of the Constitution. This was their meaning in the prohibition of slavery in the new territories; this was the reason for the gradual abolition of the slave-trade. "Henry Clay," he said, "my beau-ideal of a statesman, the man for whom I fought all my humble life—Henry Clay once said of a class of men who would repress



all tendencies to liberty and ultimate emancipation, that they must, if they would do this, go back to the era of our independence and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return; they must blow out the moral lights around us; they must penetrate the human soul and eradicate there the love of liberty; and then and not till then could they perpetuate slavery in this country! ”

Lincoln, placing himself squarely on the position that he was opposed to slavery, that it was inconsistent with the Declaration of Independence, that it was the purpose of the framers of the Constitution that it be extinguished, but that what he would most desire would be the separation of the white and black races, won for himself ultimately the West and most of the East.

Douglas maintained that there was no irrepressible conflict, and that the house was not divided against itself, for by local legislation the institution of slavery could be regulated for or against. To make him say openly that even a Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court did not mean the establishment of slavery, and that by local legislation unfavourable to it, it could be practically abolished, was Lincoln's main purpose in the debates. He succeeded in doing this, and Douglas became a lost leader South as well as West and East.

Lincoln harped so much on the Dred Scott decision that one Irishman called out, “ Give us something besides Dred Scott! ” But Lincoln drove the point home that there must be a “ purpose strong as death and eternity for which he adheres to this decision, and

for which he will adhere to all other decisions of the same Court."

Douglas dared not admit in the West that it was for the purpose of establishing slavery, and he lost the South when he was finally forced to say that the Dred Scott decision was immaterial to the establishment of slavery.

Douglas opened the debates with great swagger and so much abuse of Lincoln on the score of his black Republicanism that the latter felt himself bound to explain over and over again that he did not consider the Negro his social equal, and that he was no black Republican. Douglas, stung by Lincoln's pressing home of the Dred Scott decision which he sustained, retaliated by a list of seven questions, which pinned Lincoln very closely down to the points at issue. He asked him whether he was opposed to the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and whether he stood pledged against the admission of any more slave states even if the people wanted them; whether he stood pledged against the admission of a new state with such a constitution as the people may see fit to make; whether he stood pledged to the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia; whether he stood pledged to the prohibition of the slave trade between the states; whether he stood pledged to prohibit slavery in all the territories of the United States, north as well as south of the Missouri Compromise; and whether he was opposed to the acquisition of any new territory unless slavery is first prohibited therein.

Here Lincoln squirmed in his turn. He answered the questions honestly enough, and the answers fitted the

West, and in no way discredited him with his own constituency, as Douglas's answer did to the question whether "the people of a United States territory (can) in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State constitution."

Lincoln was not trying to straddle two sides at once, as was Douglas, and if his answers were that he never stood in favour of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and that he was not pledged, nor was he on principle against the admission of any more slave states, or the admission of a new state into the Union with such a constitution as the people of that state may see fit to make, or for the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia, or for the abolition of the slave trade between the different states—he offended only the extreme Abolitionist of the East, whose opinion politically was unimportant.

Douglas's answer to Lincoln's one question wrecked him politically for all time. He became, as Lincoln had foretold, a "dead cock in the pit," and he lost "in the game of 1860," for he answered him just as he hoped he would, that "it matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution; the people have the lawful means to introduce or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery they will elect representatives

to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. If, on the contrary, they are for it, their legislation will favour its extension. Hence, no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on that abstract question, still the right of the people to make a slave territory or a free territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska Bill."

Lincoln in his later speeches did not dwell much on the point he scored, leaving Douglas's opponents in the South to dig the ditch for him. He continued defining his position concerning the Negro, denying that he wished social equality for them, or political equality, or in any way desired that this "peculiar institution" in the states should be subject to Congress or the national administration.

Unfortunately, in studying the period, we find it smothered in a phraseology which makes it difficult to see clearly. The habit of calling slavery "the peculiar institution," in the sense that it was an institution peculiar to America, throws a cloak of nationality about it, and makes the issues appear unintelligible to an outsider. The whip of the slave-driver creates a moral repugnance, and the habit of the men of the time of speaking of the "right" and "wrong" of slavery seems to place the issue on the question of slavery instead of on the true question whether the large landlord or the small landlord should control the new West suddenly opened by the miraculous railway. There is nothing peculiar to America alone in the struggle between large and small landlordism. It is known all over the world. The only thing peculiarly American was the fact that

the cheap labour needed to make large estates profitable consisted of a race instead of a caste, as in most other countries. The advent of the railway sent the unpropertied white of the South by the million into this newly-opened land, and there, outnumbering the aristocrat, he made his stand against him.

The question of the morality of slavery itself was felt only by the few despised and persecuted Abolitionists. In reading the closing debates, therefore, it must be understood that when Lincoln says he considers slavery a *wrong*, and that he is determined to fight it as a wrong, he does not mean the institution of slavery in the South but the institution of large landlordism in the West.

He himself was very careful to define this. In his sixth debate at Quincy, on 13th October, he gave his reasons for his opposition to the Dred Scott decision, not because "Dred Scott had been decided to be a slave by a court." He would abide by the decision when "any other one or one thousand shall be decided by that court to be slaves," but he opposed it "as a political rule, which shall be binding on the voter to vote for nobody who thinks it wrong, which shall be binding on the members of Congress or the President to favour no measure that does not actually concur with the principles of that decision. We do not propose to be bound by it as a political rule in that way, because we think it 'lays the foundation not merely of enlarging and spreading out what we consider an evil, but it lays the foundation for spreading that evil into the states themselves. We propose so resisting it as to have it reversed if

we can, and a new judicial rule established upon this subject.

“ I will add this, that if there is any man who does not believe slavery is wrong in the three respects which I have mentioned (a moral, a social and a political wrong) or in any one of them, that man is misplaced and ought to leave us. While, on the other hand, if there be any man in the Republican Party who is impatient over the necessity springing from its actual presence, and is impatient of the constitutional guarantees thrown around it, and would act in disregard of these, he, too, is misplaced, standing with us. He will find his place somewhere else, for we have a due regard, so far as we are capable of understanding them, for all these things. This, gentlemen, as well as I can give it, is a plain statement of our principles in all their enormity.”

He was not defending himself before Abolitionists, but before the poor whites of the South emigrated to this region because of the cheap labour (slavery) at home which competed with them to their disadvantage. It is patent that were it really *slavery* that was a moral, social and political evil, he would have suggested fighting it in its stronghold—the South. The moral, social and political evil was the absorption of the land into large estates, which the emigrant from Europe and the South fought to prevent.

By these arguments Lincoln turned the popular tide against Douglas, and the easy victory which he would have had, had the election been in July, was now hard fought. In fact, before the vote of the people he lost. It was only by a coalition of his votes

and those of the old-time Democrats that his place as Senator was sustained. As Douglas began to realize this change in sentiment he lost his splendid confidence and his manners. His one name for Lincoln became "Black Republican," so that more than one audience asked him to change the colour and "make it a little brown," for Lincoln was not at all willing to accept the epithet proudly.

Douglas was being harassed on all sides by his Freeport Doctrine, the name given to his unfriendly legislation argument, and by the fact that he was spending more money than he could afford. His debt in that campaign amounted to \$90,000. Besides, he was being unmercifully attacked by the Buchanan Administration and the other "Lecomptonites," who were trying to defeat him as much as Lincoln, sending out *canards* that he was a slave-holder and that he maltreated his slaves in a disgraceful manner. Douglas accused Lincoln of being in collusion with the "Lecomptonites" to accomplish his ruin, but although he disclaimed any such connection, which on the face of it was an impossibility, he was not at all displeased at the bickering in the Democratic camp, and said, "Go it, husband—go it, bear!"

At Alton, where the last debate was held, Lincoln was joined by his wife. Evidently she had not much faith in the success of his radicalism, for he asked his friend, Koerner, "to tell Mary what he thought of our chances. She is rather dispirited." The chances were pretty even. If Lincoln was sectional, Douglas, with his Freeport Doctrine, had no section at all left to him. As Lincoln said, "He would not pass as coin south of the Ohio."

Lincoln spoke in thirty-nine places besides the seven debates, carrying on the campaign in his simple way, finding rest as well as he could curled up on miserable railway seats, wrapped in his grey shawl. Though he won the popular vote, he lost in the Senatorial contest, and he felt very much, he said, like the boy that stumped his toe. "It hurt too bad to laugh, and he was too big to cry." On the whole, he wrote, he was glad he had made the race, for it gave him a hearing "on the great and durable question of the age, which I would have had in no other way, and although I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I have gone."



## CHAPTER VII

### THE REPUBLICAN VICTORY

LINCOLN'S defeat in the Senatorial contest of 1858 left him for the moment rudderless. The financial strain of the campaign, though the actual expenses were only \$1000, was embarrassing, for he had no outside income except what he made from the law, which Herndon said never amounted to more than \$3000 a year. His only property was some wild lands in Indiana, which he had received from his services in the Black Hawk War. His law practice had been neglected, and he made one of his many pathetic attempts to escape from it by becoming a public lecturer. He wrote a paper on inventions, which he read several times, but which received very little notice. His *forte* lay in politics.

The Senatorial contest in Illinois had made him a national figure, due more, perhaps at the time, to the importance of his opponent than to the doctrines he expressed. He became recognized as the rival of Douglas. When Douglas was called by the Democrats to canvass for the Gubernatorial election in Ohio, Lincoln was called for the same purpose by the Republicans. He used the arguments he made the year before in Illinois: that slavery was a moral wrong, and that it was not in the meaning of the framers of the Government that it should be extended. Douglas, try as he would to change the theme from slavery to

the principles of popular sovereignty, was forced back into a discussion of slavery. To the emigrants from Ireland or Germany the abstract rights of the settler to form his own form of government was not as important as the concrete right that it should already be free and open for themselves and their families coming later. In this campaign Ohio went Republican by a good majority.

Lincoln was being asked to speak for the Republicans as far west as Kansas and Minnesota, and his friends in Illinois began planning to offer his name for the Presidential Convention of 1860. The Illinois State Committee saw to it, through editorials in the daily papers, that the public opinion in his favour should be gathered and intensified.

Lincoln was aware of these political manoeuvres and was not entirely averse to them. Reduced railway fares to the seat of the Convention were initiated and newspaper men were conciliated. To a politician Lincoln wrote: "As to your kind wishes for myself, allow me to say I cannot enter the ring on a money basis—first, because in the main it is wrong; and secondly, I have not and cannot get the money. I say in the main the use of money is wrong; but for certain objects in a political contest the use of same is both right and indispensable. With me, as with yourself, this long struggle has been one of great pecuniary loss. I now distinctly say this: If you should be appointed a delegate to Chicago, I will furnish \$100 to bear the expenses of the trip."

Lincoln's attitude towards his candidacy was expressed in a letter to his friend: "I am not in a position

where it would hurt much for me not to be nominated on the national ticket, but I am where it would hurt some for me not to get the Illinois delegates."

The Republicans of the East, who had a candidate of their own, Wm. H. Seward, upon whom they were all, with the exception of Greeley, pretty much agreed, invited Lincoln to speak in New York, to get a closer view of this new figure in American politics. It was taken for granted that the second place on the ticket was to go to the West. Seward, who had expressed himself on the irrepressible conflict, even before Lincoln had made his "house divided against itself" speech, was considered much more radical on the slavery question than Lincoln. The South denounced him for intending to make war upon them not only because of his irrepressible conflict argument, but also because he had said that there was a "higher law" than the Constitution which dedicated the land to freedom. To counteract this "higher law" doctrine they were planning to give the Vice-Presidential place to a man who would not be offensive to the more conservative elements, and Lincoln was the most likely man for the place. Time and again he had reiterated that he believed in the Constitution, that he would admit new slave states and that he would enforce a Fugitive Slave Law.

Lincoln accepted the invitation to speak in New York, and Herndon says it was he who suggested that he speak on politics. Surely Lincoln was not planning to give his address on inventions! At any rate he took Herndon's advice and spoke on the intentions of the framers of the Constitution on the matter of slavery.

It was a carefully-written exposition of the case, and he used for his text the words of Senator Douglas: "Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well and better than we do now." By arguments which would take much historical study to follow he demonstrated that the framers of the Constitution regarded slavery as a wrong, and that it was so placed in the Government as to be ultimately discarded.

He spoke in Cooper Union, and never before had he such a distinguished audience. The culture of the East was on the platform, and the aged poet, Bryant, was in the chair. Lincoln's voice was high and thin when he first rose to speak, nervous as he was at this new ordeal and at the fact that his costume, kept in his bag from Springfield, had not been pressed for the occasion. But he soon forgot his own discomfort as he plunged into the theme which engrossed him. The address was earnest and profound, the racy colloquialisms of the West were omitted, no quaint stories, not the usual summing up—"this is as plain as the weight of three small hogs"—yet the papers which printed his speech in full next day eulogised it, regretting they could not portray "the tones, the gestures, the kindling eye and the mirth-provoking look" with which it was read. Lincoln spoke in many other places in the East besides New York, but apart from impressing the Republicans in that section personally, he in no way caused them to consider him as a possible Presidential candidate. Even his debates with Douglas tended more as a disqualification of the Democratic leader for the Presidency than a qualification of himself for the Republicans.

In the meantime, coupled with the fact that the country was nearing another Presidential election, it was thrown into ferment by continued slavery agitations coming from all sides. The Southern Merchants' Associations were clamouring against the personal Liberty Laws of the North, which were passed by some state to counteract the Fugitive Slave Law, and for the repeal of the Anti-Slave Trade Act. They went so far as to pass disunion resolutions, and Congress was again a scene of a bitter slavery discussion, caused by John Brown's raid. John Brown, with eighteen men, had hoped to capture the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, in Virginia, and raise the flag of negro insurrection. On 16th October 1859 the attempt was made, but the slaves did not join him, and in three days he was captured. To the South, always in terror of servile insurrection, this was a most feared and dreaded event, and the impression took hold of it that the whole North was allied in this movement for the absolute abolition of slavery. The militia and the marines were poured out, and the little band at Harper's Ferry was surrounded. John Brown was captured, and on 2nd December he was hanged for treason. The case was brought up in Congress and became the cause for accusations of conspiracy against the North. Lincoln spoke in Troy the day John Brown was hanged, but he did not draw from it the inspiration which the Abolitionists of the East did, who held religious services and tolled funeral bells. Lincoln used the execution only to serve as a threat against the Southerners, who were already saying that they would secede from the Union if a Republican President were elected.

He would deal with the Southerners who would do so, he said, "as the state of Virginia dealt with old John Brown, who was hanged for treason. It availed him nothing before the law that he thought himself right . . . and we cannot object, though he agreed with us in calling slavery wrong. Now, if you undertake to destroy the Union contrary to law, if you commit treason against the United States, our duty will be to deal with you as John Brown has been dealt with. We shall try to do our duty." It was this different approach to the slavery question, one from the standpoint of the negro, the other from the standpoint of the white, that marked the difference between the Republicans and the Abolitionists.

Fuel was added to the already rising flames by accusations against the Administration that fraud and bribes had been used to control Congress in its vote on the Kansas problem, and much corruption was brought to light. But the discredited Administration went on boldly in its pro-slavery policy. Again and again Buchanan urged territorial expansion, the acquisition of Cuba, the protectorate of the dissolving Republic of Mexico, and the control of the Isthmus.

In such a state of agitation, the country turned to watch the nominating conventions of the political parties. The Democratic Party was the first to meet. The Convention took place in Charleston, South Carolina, 23rd April 1860, only to be disrupted by the extreme demands of the Southern wing, who refused to discuss nominations before passing upon the principles of their platform. Upon those principles the anti-Leocompton Democrats, as the Douglas wing was called, and

the Southern "Fire-eaters" could not agree. Two reports of the Committee on platform were reported. The Majority report, representing seventeen states and 127 electoral votes, based itself entirely on the theory of the right of property in slaves and the Congressional protection of it, that is upon the principle of popular sovereignty. The Minority report, representing fifteen states and 176 electoral votes, said that the question of property in states and territories was judicial in character, and that the Democratic Party should abide by the past and future decisions of the Supreme Court, thus following up a strict interpretation of the Dred Scott decision. Upon other points they were agreed, such as the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, the acquisition of the island of Cuba, the building of a railroad to the Pacific and the resolution that the Personal Liberty laws of the Free State were hostile in their character, subversive of the Constitution and revolutionary in their effect. After much balloting both reports were refused, and it was voted to abide by the Democratic platform of 1856. At this the delegates of eight slave-holding states withdrew, amid the cheers of the citizens of Charleston. The remaining delegates to the Convention adjourned to fill the vacancies made by the seceding states, voting to meet in Baltimore, which was more neutral ground, within a month (18th June).

The Rump Convention held its own meeting and adopted the resolutions of the Minority report, which read:

1. "That the Democracy of the United States hold these cardinal principles on the subject of slavery in

the territories. First, that Congress has no power to abolish slavery in the territories. Second, that the territorial legislature has no power to abolish slavery in any territory, nor to prohibit the introduction of slaves therein, nor any power to exclude slavery therefrom, nor any right to destroy or impair the right of property in slaves by any legislation whatever.

2. "That the Federal Government must protect slavery on the high seas, in the territories and wherever else its Constitutional authority extends."

The majority of the Convention met in Baltimore, but when it became apparent, through their success on the forms of organization, that the Douglas faction would win, more Southern members withdrew, carrying with them the Chairman of the Convention and several Northern delegates. The rest of the body proceeded to the nomination of Douglas for President.

The second group of seceders adopted the resolution of the Charleston seceders and nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky for President.

To add to the confusion of parties a new one was organized, called the Constitutional Union Party, made up of the conservative element of the old Whigs and Know-Nothings, who were opposed to the extreme demands of both the Democrats and the Republicans. It met in Baltimore on 9th May and nominated John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts, thus hoping to connect North and South, and declared with naïve simplicity for "the Constitution of the country, the Union of the states and the enforcement of the laws."

The Republican Party had not yet named its candidate. With three parties already in the field, one



outspokenly sectional and two semi-compromising, the contest lay between it and the opposing sectional party. Whichever side was numerically stronger would win. The old commercial Whig elements had joined the Republican forces in the East even before the West, realizing their commercial antagonism to the South some years before the Western farmer came in direct conflict with slavery. The last fifteen years had seen a revolution in transportation and industries, cities had grown, a working-class had appeared. The famines and hard times of Ireland and Germany sent their hundreds of thousands yearly to America. Men no longer flocked to the wilderness, but settled close together to develop the internal resources of the land by the marvellous new machines that were invented, thousands a year; and the East, already commercial and industrial, waited for the West to withdraw its entire allegiance from the South. Its great carrier, the Mississippi, had made the South and West one for a period of two generations. They were united by their agricultural interests and were both suspicious of the commercial schemes of the East, and were jealous together of central power. But these were weak ties, beside the industrial changes which were turning the face of the West toward the East, whereby the labourer of one section could become the small capitalist of the other. Victory lay before the Republican Party if it could get within its fold but two of the Western States which had formerly been Democratic—Indiana and Illinois. Lincoln had shown in the sectional contest that Illinois was equally divided between Republicanism and Democracy. A Western candidate might carry these doubtful states.

A great point was made in that direction when it was voted that Chicago be the seat of the Convention in June.

Lincoln was in the mind of the Republican State Convention of Illinois when it met in May. The ground was so well prepared for him that he seemed to enter upon the arena spontaneously, as if by a sudden popular demand. Lincoln was sitting on his heels in a hall among the onlookers when the presiding officer suggested that a distinguished citizen of Illinois should have a seat upon the platform. The audience knew whom he meant, and Lincoln was lifted upon their shoulders and brought to a seat of honour. Later it was voted by the House that an old Democrat, who was standing outside ready to present something to the Convention, be admitted. The door was opened, and John Hanks, the pioneer cousin of Lincoln, marched in, bearing two triangular rails and a banner on which were printed the words:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,  
THE RAIL CANDIDATE  
FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860

Two rails from a lot of three thousand made in 1830 by Thomas Hanks and Abe Lincoln—whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.

Lincoln rose and said that he was not sure whether he made those identical rails or not, but that he was quite sure he had made a great many just as good. This demonstration over, the Convention instructed its delegates to give their vote as a unit for Lincoln in the National Convention which was to meet a week later.

To this Convention, the Eastern section came ready to vote for Governor Seward of New York. But though acceptable to the East, he appeared too radical for the West, and the delegates felt they were too close to victory to sacrifice it by a candidate who would not be voted for in the doubtful states. Lincoln then became the one possible candidate, not well enough known by the people at large for them to be against him, and known just well enough to appear safe and sound to the newly-turned West.

To those present the nomination of Lincoln at Chicago seemed unlooked-for and accidental. Seward's men came in full force, and the papers of the East had "boomed" him for months. They were prepared for victory. But the Lincoln men knew that if in the first ballot in the Convention at Chicago Seward were to fail in getting the majority, he could not rise, for they came with their maximum amount of supporters. Lincoln was in home territory and could gather recruits. To define his position more clearly, he sent a dispatch, on the eve of the voting, saying he agreed with Seward in his irrepressible conflict idea, and in negro equality, but he opposed his "higher law" doctrine. Underlined in this dispatch was the sentence, "Make no contracts that will bind me," to which his managers did not pay absolute attention, for they were more intent upon receiving the nomination than on being scrupulous. By bargaining and half-binding Lincoln they received the votes of Indiana, Pennsylvania (which was more interested in the Morill tariff than in the question of slavery), and New Jersey.

The Convention, which met in the Wigwam, a large pavilion holding ten thousand men, built especially for the occasion, was crowded with Lincoln men. On the morning of the balloting, the Seward contingent paraded the streets of Chicago with much flying of banners and music; but the lusty Westerners filled all the seats and were there in full force to shout for their "favourite son." Such a series of yells went up at the mention of his name that all other "howlers" were discouraged. It was this incident which gave rise to the statements later that Lincoln was nominated because of the accidental crowding of the Wigwam with his friends. As a matter of fact, the voting was pretty well arranged before that. At the first ballot Seward received  $173\frac{1}{2}$  votes; Lincoln, 102. At the second ballot Pennsylvania threw in her vote with Lincoln, and he stood 181 to Seward's  $184\frac{1}{2}$ ; and at the third ballot Lincoln began to gain from all directions, his vote rising to  $231\frac{1}{2}$ , while Seward went back to 180. Before it was over Lincoln's total amounted to 354, and soon Seward's managers themselves moved that his nomination be made unanimous. For second place, Hannibal Hamlin of Massachusetts was nominated, to appease the more radical wing of the party. Cannon boomed, torch-light processions were organized, rails and axes became the symbols of the campaign, and "Honest Abe" and "the Rail Splitter" common appellations.

The Abolitionists of the East received the announcement of Lincoln's nomination with scorn. "Who is this huckster in politics?" asked Wendell Phillips. "Who is this country court advocate?" It was

Phillips who called Abraham Lincoln "the slave hound of Illinois," because he did not favour the abolition of the Fugitive Slave Laws. In fact, to most of the anti-slavery elements of the East this nomination seemed a sad compromise. Seward's defeat meant to them that the party had not the courage to put forward a man who had been violent in the opposition of slavery. But the delegates in the Party Convention were seeking a practical result, and they chose a man who, without promising to lower the Republican standard, was able to get the most electoral votes.

Lincoln did not go on his own canvass, but went back to Springfield to await the general elections in November, and this town became a miniature capitol, with lobbyists and office-seekers and party delegates, and the usual crowd of reporters and photographers. He received everyone who came to him in a little room in the State House. He saw all but consulted none, and on the question of the impending crisis maintained a Sphinx-like silence, warding off all embarrassing questions with apt anecdotes.

The Nationalists, who realized the danger of the extreme sectional elections going on in the South and in the North, tried fusion in many states with any faction that would unite with them. But the people of each section had girded themselves for the fight, and fusion only succeeded in New Jersey, where Lincoln lost three electoral votes. By the voting of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Indiana—October states, so called because they voted in October instead of in November—it was seen that the Republican vote would

be victorious. In November Lincoln was elected, not by a majority of the people at large, but because he polled the largest vote of any of the other candidates. He received 1,866,452 votes; Douglas, 1,375,157 votes; Breckenridge, the candidate of the extreme South, 847,953 votes; and Bell, the nominee of the hastily-got-together harmony convention, 590,631 votes. Thus, adding all the votes with the exception of those given to Lincoln, he would have lost by almost a million. Had there been some more apportionate system of representation besides the two party systems still existent, this sectional vote might never have succeeded in almost foundering the country. As it was, Lincoln was duly elected President of the United States of America in November 1860, and had to wait until 4th March 1861 before he could take hold of the reins of government to direct it towards the principles upon which he was chosen.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SECESSION

LINCOLN, suddenly brought forth from the obscurity of a middle-west town to the position of President-elect of the United States, at a time of utter mad excitement and panic, had to bear the usual amount of mud-flinging with which the opposition deluges the successful candidate. He was a "nigger," an ape, and his father an imported gorilla from Mozambique! The abuse knew no bounds. Even his own supporters looked askance at his uncouth appearance and mistook simplicity of manner for boorishness. Mistrust, lack of confidence, disrespect were on every side. But the problems that confronted the nation at this moment were too vast for him to stop to consider his own pain, brutal as were the blows. The situation looked disastrous. Four months must elapse before a President-elect can enter office, and within these four months he had to watch a well-organized movement for secession grow and be consummated, without any hindrance from the outgoing Administration.

He was diametrically opposed to the position and tenets held by Buchanan, who, having been elected by a Southern vote, stood for principles which left him powerless to act in the face of the crisis. Lincoln was elected on a squarely-placed platform of restriction upon slavery, and with slight fears of offending

Southern desires; nevertheless, not only was he unable to effect anything, but he was without help from his own friends. Born of the people, he knew instinctively that they would resent any ultimate breaking up of the Union or loss of territory for lack of firmness. But the expression of the leaders in the North almost coincided with that of the leaders of the South. If the South said, "We want eternal separation from a Black Republican Government," Republicans like Greeley, as well as the Abolitionists, advocated separation from the "slave-drivers" or saw Constitutional reasons whereby each separate state, if it so desired, had as much right to secede as the original thirteen colonies had from the domination of England. At best, the threats of separation of the South were called election bunkum. Thus rebellion brewed while Lincoln's hands were tied.

It was not a new thing for the South to threaten secession. She had done so repeatedly in the eighty years of Union. Ten years before, in 1850, secession seemed near over the admission of California as a free state. The Compromise measures of 1850 prevented the break for a while, but at any suggestion of defeat for the slave-power the idea of secession rushed to the fore. So, in 1856, when it seemed for a moment that Fremont might be elected, letters from the Governor of Virginia were sent to various Southern governors "to protect the honour and interests of the slaveholding states," and there were letters from Southern Senators to Jefferson Davis, who was Secretary of War under Pierce, discussing the project of exchanging percussion for flint muskets, and the apportionment



of arms to be divided among the Southern States. The election of Buchanan allayed that movement, but it burst forth again in the time of the Douglas-Lincoln debates, when the country was startled by the so-called "Scarlet Letter" of a Southerner named Yancey. This was a call for the organization of Committees of Safety over all the cotton states, for the purpose of "firing the Southern heart, instructing the Southern mind, giving courage to each other, and at the proper moment, by one organized concerted action, precipitating the cotton states into a revolution." The excitement that this letter caused drew forth moderate disclaimers on the part of the South, but at heart they saw no value in the continued union with the North, and very eagerly forced the split in the Democratic Party, so that by the election of either one extreme or the other, the day of what they considered unbeneficial compromises should cease. The election of Lincoln was greeted with joy by many of the Southern leaders. At last there was good cause for action.

Three agencies were employed to effect dissolution. The one to create public opinion was called the 1860 Association. This group gave the leading men of the South a medium of interchange of information and views upon the impending crisis, and was used for distributing tracts and pamphlets to inquire into the defences of the states and effect a military organization. It was organized in September 1860, and by November 166,000 pamphlets were already published and being passed through second and third editions. The second agent was the control of the machinery of the states by the governors and other functionaries,

so that they could convene special sessions of the legislatures, urge the meeting of delegates for conventions, and, most important of all, refuse to pay the customs to the United States, and hold the Federal arsenals and forts as State property. The third was even more powerful than the other two. It lay in the manipulations of Senators and Cabinet Ministers to extract a virtual promise from the administration not to coerce the South. It placed men in authority who fostered an attack upon the administration which they were supposed to support and forewarned their constituencies of any action the enemy was contemplating. They formed both the prime movers and the spies of the secession elements at home. Thus, Jefferson Davis, afterwards President of the Confederacy, called in to help shape Buchanan's last message to Congress, of 4th December 1860, succeeded in making it vacillating and a virtual admission that the Constitution had no power to prevent the states from seceding. This message, the *London Times* said a month later, was a "greater blow to the American people than all the rant of a Georgian governor or the ordinances of a Charleston Convention." It admitted that there were certain defects in a democratic form of government which make the enforcement of the laws upon the component parts impossible. For though it said no state had a right to secede from the Union, nevertheless the Union had no right to coerce the states. In the same way the Secretary of War, Floyd, when advised to send troops to the South to prevent secession, sent arms but no soldiers.

Having gained immunity and arms, the secession

leaders hastened to consummate their plans. South Carolina, which had even in October, a month before the election of Lincoln, convened a Legislature in special session for the very purpose of ordering a State convention to consider secession in the advent of a Lincoln victory, now with these assured promises of Buchanan, sent envoys to him on the question of non-coercion, and requested that the forts of Charleston, Sumter and Moultrie be left ungarrisoned. Buchanan received them, but such a storm of indignation arose from the North that a Cabinet crisis ensued and three members resigned. Their places were taken by men who were firm in the conviction that the Federal Government had authority in every state, at least concerning its own arsenals. This Cabinet crisis on 14th December caused another crisis in Congress on the same day, in which most of the Southern Senators left their seats, sending letters to their constituencies that the "argument was over." Six days later South Carolina, by special Convention assembled, voted secession from the Union. The *Charleston Mercury* issued an extra edition, bearing the headline in large black type:

"THE UNION IS NO MORE."

Though it was intrinsically true that the argument was over, nevertheless in Congress itself it had just begun, and the South at this moment could have had anything it asked. Congress was on its knees. Both houses had a Democratic majority, and the central conservative faction was strong. A committee of thirty-three in the House and a committee of thirteen in the

Senate were appointed to bring in Compromise resolutions. Over and over again committees in the House and in the Senate were formed to bring in such resolutions, but generally the Southerners refused to sit upon them. The final committees of thirty-three and thirteen seemed to have been more successful, and the so-called Crittenden resolutions were adopted. These proposed a Constitutional amendment which provided that: 1. All territory of the United States north of 36° 30' should be free; all south of it slave-soil. 2. Slaves should be protected as property by all the departments of the territorial Government. 3. That states should be admitted with or without slavery, as their Constitutions provided, whether the states were north or south of 36° 30'. 4. Congress should have no power to shut slavery out of the territories. 5. The United States should pay owners for rescued fugitive slaves.

Cannon boomed to celebrate the success of this "Compromise," and Congress went one step further and actually passed an amendment to the Constitution which promised to permit slavery to rest forever undisturbed in the states. This was endorsed by Lincoln on the day of his inauguration, and by two states, Ohio and Maryland, and only failed because of the state of secession already in the country, which made the necessary three-fifths ratification of the states impossible.

The Southern oligarchy, far from being deterred by these overtures of peace, went ahead in its plans for secession. The seceding Congressmen and the office-holders of each state brought in carefully-framed resolutions at their Legislatures for military appro-

priations, and called for Conventions to vote upon secession. This movement came from the officials to the people and was in no way a popular one. The conception of state rights was one which permitted a state to leave the Union but not to remain in it. The plan of the oligarchy was to interchange representatives from each state, and by holding local elections so to frame public opinion that on the 4th of March, when the incoming Administration was to take office, there should appear simultaneously upon that day a new administration in the South, with its own rival form of government. The sudden change in the Cabinet of Buchanan caused a change of plan in January. Immediate secession was agreed upon, the Convention of the States to meet in Montgomery, Alabama, 15th February 1861; and the cotton states Senators were advised to remain in their seats, "to keep the hands of Mr Buchanan tied."

With this change, Mississippi passed her ordinance of secession on 9th January; Florida, 10th January; Alabama, 11th January; Georgia, 19th January; Louisiana, 26th January; and Texas, 1st February. Thus only six states followed the seceding South Carolina. The governors of these states immediately took possession of all the Federal posts. The evacuations were generally peaceable, the posts being held by men influenced by Southern opinion. The occupants, as a military courtesy, were allowed to salute the flag and go home.

In none of the states were the secession ordinances submitted to a vote of the people for ratification, so little did they believe that the people were with them.

Florida seceded quickly, but the white population of Florida was only large enough to furnish one Congressional representative. In Georgia the question was hotly contested, and American "machine methods" were used to rush the question through in Convention. While peace conferences were still being held in Washington, the Convention of the seven seceding states met in Montgomery on the 4th of February instead of the 15th. The body called itself a Provisional Congress, though the members were not sent by a direct vote of the people but were appointed by the secession Conventions. Votes were taken by states instead of numbers. On 8th February the name, The Confederate States of America, was adopted, and the provisional Congress retained legislative power for one year. On 9th February it elected Jefferson Davis as President and Alexander H. Stephens as its Vice-President. On the 11th of March it prepared a permanent Constitution, which should come into effect a year later. In the permanent Constitution as in the provisional one it modelled itself upon the Constitution of the United States, except that instead of the phrase, "We, the people," establish so and so, it made the significant change, "Each state acting in its sovereign and independent character" do so and so. It provided for the protection of slavery "as it now exists in the Confederate States, to be protected by Congress and by the territorial Government in any newly-acquired territory." It specifically prohibited protective tariffs and internal improvements at the general expense, and denied the granting of the franchise to persons not citizens under the general law of naturalization.

On the 18th of February, Jefferson Davis was duly inaugurated as President of the Confederate States of America. He organized his Cabinet, and a regular army of ten thousand men was ordered to be established, and a hundred thousand volunteers for twelve months to be enlisted. Agents were sent to Europe to obtain war materials, and, what was more important, to argue for foreign recognition of the states. A committee of three was appointed to proceed to Washington to negotiate for peaceful secession. When Lincoln arrived in Washington this form of government had not yet been consummated, and the conciliatory measures of the Peace Committee were being duly voted upon.

Lincoln, too, even before his arrival at Washington, though unwilling to compromise upon the extension of slavery, fell into the general plan of conciliation. After much hesitation he wrote an open letter, saying that the incoming Administration meant in no way to disturb local institutions in the states. But in his quiet, unobtrusive way he was writing letters begging the Republican leaders not to go further. On 11th December he wrote: "Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery. The instant you do they have us under again, all our labour is lost, and sooner or later must be done over again. . . . The tug is to come, and better now than later."

The North, distrustful and suspicious, was watching the new pilot, who was being "hurried to the helm in a tornado." The new pilot was discreet. His one aim at this time was to stand by the Chicago

platform, to say as little as possible, and neither commit himself nor offend anyone.

He had great difficulties in drawing up the slate for his Cabinet. Seward, who was the recognized leader of the Republican Party, and who had been considered as a Presidential candidate, was looked upon as the man behind the throne. Lincoln shrewdly wanted to take in all the representative leaders of the country in his Cabinet, and thus not only have the ablest help, but have a broad Administration, national as far as possible. Seward was an old-time Whig and had enemies among the more extreme Republicans, represented by Salmon P. Chase, who was twice Governor of Ohio and twice Senator from that state. Lincoln found difficulty in gaining the consent of these two to take portfolios, and it was these men he wanted above any other. Seward would not accept with Chase, and Chase would not accept a subordinate position, nor would he work with what he called the conglomerate nature of Lincoln's slate. Lincoln had wanted Seward as his Secretary of State; Chase as the Secretary of the Treasury; the post of Secretary of War, after much hesitation, he had given to Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, because of a pledge his managers had given to the delegates of that state in the Chicago Convention. But Cameron was a notoriously unprincipled politician, and Lincoln, whose only thought was for making an efficient Administration, did not like the placing of Cameron in his Cabinet. The four other members of the Cabinet were one-time Democrats: Gideon Wells of Connecticut was Secretary of the Navy; Caleb B. Smith of Indiana, Secretary of the Interior; Edward



Bates of Missouri, Attorney-General; and Montgomery Black of Maryland, Postmaster-General. He was not at all anxious to be partisan at this moment, to which of course objection was made. He was accused of overbalancing his Cabinet with non-partisans, there being four Democrats to three Republicans. Lincoln's answer was characteristic. "Why," he said, "you forget me. I will count as at least one in this Administration."

But the truth remained, that he was willing to embrace as many non-Republican Unionists as would come to him. It was true, too, that he was counted very little if at all in this time of panic. Seward was the recognized leader; he, too, recognizing himself in that light, making speeches and giving out pronouncements. As to his Cabinet, "Dr Lincoln succeeded in his great feat of balancing," as one satirical paper put it, but not until after his inauguration on 4th March. His success was mainly due to his own firmness, coupled with that gentleness which made each man think that he was gaining upon him. It took Seward several weeks, it took Chase several years, to appreciate that faculty in him.

The President-elect, besides being busy at Cabinet-making and interviewing the sudden hosts of "original Lincoln men" who flocked to Springfield for appointments, spent his time in a little back room in the State House writing his Inaugural Address, and reading for the occasion the speech of Henry Clay in 1850, the Proclamation of Jackson against Nullification, Webster's reply to Hayne, and the Constitution.

Before emerging from his obscurity for his journey

to Washington he visited his father's grave, ordered a new tombstone for it, rode to Coles County to see his aged stepmother, said good-bye to New Salem friends, all with the air of a man who was going to a far land not to return. He was almost overpowered by the task before him, and though his bent towards superstition prevented him from using the word "War," at this crisis he must have seen its approach clearly.

He was so careful not to commit himself, that the impression he made upon the country when he finally did emerge was that of unseemingly levity in the time of trouble and of being without any underlying principle for his new office. His last words from Springfield were sad, and carried with them a foreboding of death. "No one can appreciate," he said to the neighbours at the railway station seeing him off, "my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of this people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington." The comparison with Washington was considered a little presumptuous.

In Indianapolis he told them plainly that the preservation of the Union was their business more than his. At another place he likened the Southern conception of Union to a free-love arrangement. This did not please the people. Their Puritanism was shocked that the President-elect should speak in such terms. A little girl asked him to grow a beard, saying that

she thought it more dignified for a President to have one. He wrote to her, asking if "the people would not call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin it now?" It was all too unserious. He did grow his beard, and when he met the little girl he kissed her. "A man without dignity," they said. In Utica he made one facetious remark and nothing more. It was: "I appear before you that I may see you, and that you may see me, and I am willing to admit that, so far as the ladies are concerned, I have the best of the bargain, though I wish it to be understood that I do not make the same acknowledgment concerning the men."

But there was nothing else for him to say. He was eager to get down to Washington and begin to act. The government was slipping from his hands. Treason was around him, and he rose to speak only to let the people see him, which he thought was what they wanted. It was time to begin showing what he meant to do later, when he had the power. He made one definite statement at this time. It was: "To the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the states."

That was interpreted as an attack on the South. His great emphasis lay on union; the slavery question, he argued, was only a potential disturber. "One section of our country believes slavery is right," he said, "and ought to be extended, and the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute." His Inaugural Address was

a plea to the Southerners that the accession of a Republican Administration did not endanger the peace and personal security of their property. But he repeated the statement that the Administration meant to collect its customs and protect its posts in the South, which again set it ablaze. Upon the question of dissolution he was firm. "Physically speaking, we cannot separate, we cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impossible wall between them." He ended with an admonition to the South: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it."

His last paragraph, which is famous in history, was suggested by Seward, to whom he gave this paper to correct. Seward, thinking he ought not to close with the above argument, wrote two suggestions, both clumsy and cumbersome. The one which Lincoln modified read: "I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens or enemies, but fellow-countrymen and brethren. Although passion has stained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. The mystic chords which, proceeding from so many battlefields and so many patriot graves, pass through all the hearts and all the hearths in this broad continent of ours, will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation."

Lincoln wrote with the measured beat of an axe: "I am loath to close. We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may be strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely as they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The last ride to Washington was a hurried flight in the night. Rumours of assassination were rife, and in Harrisburg he was advised to cancel his engagement in Baltimore, where they thought there was a well-developed plot to do away with him, and to go directly to Washington. He consented, but regretted it ever after, and his over-cautiousness in the beginning may have been the cause of his later recklessness, which ended in his assassination in 1865.

At one moment he thought he had lost his Inaugural Address. He came to his friend Lamon and said: "Lamon, I guess I have lost my certificate of moral character, written by myself. Bob has lost my grip-sack containing my Inaugural Address. I want you to help me find it. I feel a good deal as the old member of the Methodist Church did when he lost his wife at the camp-meeting and went up to an old elder of the church and asked him whereabouts in hell his wife was. In fact, I am in a worse fix than my Methodist friend, for if it were nothing but a wife missing, mine would be sure to pop up serenely." Incidentally the Inaugural also popped up.

With the government now in the hands of the Republicans the first question was the policy to be assumed towards the seceded states. Secession was not to be permitted. The North, strong and victorious, felt itself in no way ready to concede to a shrinkage of territory, yet coercion was not to be used. But there was no way of maintaining authority in the South. Senators and Congressmen were resigning, the officers in the Army and Navy and the officials of the Civil Service were leaving their posts, and all but three of the forts were evacuated—Fort Pickens near Florida, and Forts Moultrie and Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Lincoln's idea was simple: if authority was to be maintained these three forts were to be held; but his Cabinet, Congress, the expressed opinion of the North, were against him. That would be coercion and force. Some other way must be found to hold the South, either by conceding their demands as the Peace Conference suggested, or a foreign war to rouse their patriotism, as Seward romantically proposed. Lincoln had his mind pretty well made up, and began giving secret orders to hold the forts, while Seward was virtually promising the envoys, through Chief Justice Campbell, that they would be given up.

With these problems before him, Lincoln was beset and overwhelmed by office-seekers and lobbyists, for each new Administration brings with it the necessity of refilling most of the official posts of the country. He hardly had time to himself to grasp the details of the situation, and he felt very much, he said, "like a man letting rooms in one part of the house while the other part was on fire."

The matter of the forts became pressing, and Lincoln finally, on 29th March, ordered the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy to be ready for an expedition by sea not later than 6th April. Seward, who was promising the opposite, and who considered himself much more skilled than Lincoln in politics and diplomacy through a greater experience in such matters, and as one upon whom the burden of the situation rested, became alarmed at this act, and on 1st April sent Lincoln a document entitled "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration":

"First. We are at the end of a month's administration and yet without a policy, either domestic or foreign.

"Second. This, however, is not culpable, and it has even been unavoidable. The presence of the Senate, with the need to meet applications for patronage, have prevented attention to other and more grave matters.

"Third. But further delay to adopt and prosecute our policy for both domestic and foreign affairs would not only bring scandal upon the Administration but danger upon the country.

"Fourth. To do this we must dismiss the applicant for office. But how? I suggest that we make a local appointment, forthwith leaving foreign or general ones for ulterior and occasional action.

"Fifth. The policy at home. I am aware that my views are singular and perhaps not sufficiently explained. My system is built upon this *idea* as a ruling one, namely, that we must

"CHANGE THE QUESTION BEFORE THE PUBLIC FROM ONE UPON SLAVERY, OR ABOUT SLAVERY, FOR A QUESTION UPON UNION OR DISUNION.

"In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question to one of PATRIOTISM OR UNION.

"The occupation or evacuation of Fort Sumter, although not in fact a slavery or a party question, is so *regarded*. Witness the temper manifested by the Republicans in the free States and even by the Union men in the South.

"I would, therefore, terminate it as a safe means for changing the issue. I deem it fortunate that the last Administration created the necessity.

"For the rest I would simultaneously defend and reinforce all the forts in the Gulf, and have the Navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade. Put the island of Key West under martial law. This will raise distinctly the question of *Union or Disunion*. I would maintain every fort and possession in the South.

#### "FOR FOREIGN NATIONS

"I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once.

"I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico and Central America, to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention.

"And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France,

"Would convene Congress and declare war against them.

"But whatever policy we adopt there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

"Devolve it on some member of the Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end and all agree and abide.

"It is not in my especial province.

"But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility."



Lincoln answered that letter the same night, mildly but firmly, as follows:

“ At the beginning of that month, in the Inaugural, I said, ‘ The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts! ’ This had your distinct approval at the time; and taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

“ Again, I do not perceive how the reinforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a party issue, while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

“ The news received yesterday in regard to St Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

“ I remark that if this must be done I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all of the Cabinet.”

It is interesting to know that Lincoln never made political capital of Seward’s “ Thoughts for the President’s Consideration,” nor did he show it to anyone, the document being found in a drawer after his death. He understood the good faith in which it was sent. Seward’s ideas were muddled with the traditional

thinking of the commercial East; foreign wars, to seem not to hold a fort and yet to hold it, to evade issues. Lincoln, fortunately, had no traditions, and his mind was clearer. He spoke for the free homesteader who wanted the control of the land. He was to hold the forts quietly and wait for a protest from the enemy, the true method of the pioneer. Over-cautiousness, a habit of doing all the chores himself, made him send orders after the War Department had sent theirs, with the result that the relief to be sent to Charleston went to Fort Pickens, and Sumter had no means of defence. Captain Anderson, who occupied Fort Moultrie, which was nearer Charleston than Sumter, was ordered by the Governor of South Carolina not to leave Moultrie for Sumter. In the evening, by a ruse, he took his forty men and rowed over to Sumter. In revenge, the South Carolinians, without waiting for an order from their own Secretary of War, fired upon the fort. Sumter held out until it was on fire, and then was evacuated, 15th April 1861. No one was killed.

To the relief of Lincoln and the Republicans the attack came from the South. "The flag was fired upon!" All the talk of conciliation and no-coercion, as Lincoln had surmised, lay in a consciousness of strength. Ultimately the North would follow up its "victory of the ballot by the bullet." Only the American's habit of compromise, which would sacrifice any principle if its material prosperity be not disturbed, made it appear vacillating on the question of secession. With the attack on Fort Sumter the North rushed to protect its territories. Chauvinism came to the fore. "The rebels were to be whipped for insulting the flag," and

Wendell Phillips and other Abolitionists who advocated separation from the "wayward sisters" were mobbed and forced to travel with a body-guard for protection.

The North stood consolidated and ready for the fight.

## CHAPTER IX

### CIVIL WAR

THE day after the fall of Sumter, 15th April 1861, found an excited and zealous North now ready to give its life's blood and its money to protect itself, where heretofore it could not be made to part with a cent to purchase the slaves and do away with the basic cause of the menace. For this the brunt of the expense would have fallen on the rich upper classes, and such measures, when proposed, never reached Committee reading. A war, where the life and money of the people themselves were to be offered as the sacrifice, was the only means possible. Lincoln, whose interest lay with the West rather than the East, and who would have much preferred indemnity to war, was forced to bend to circumstances and issue a call for seventy-five thousand troops for three months. This was five times the number of the existing standing army, but the hope that the struggle would be brief is manifested in the fact that the enlistment was only for three months. This call was not published until the following day, to give the states time to hear of the fall of Sumter.

As was expected, the North responded eagerly, but the border states showed quite a different spirit. The four lower border states—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas—seceded immediately and joined the Confederacy, while the upper four—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri—were with great

difficulty kept in the Union. They were none of them plantation states, nevertheless slavery was held as valuable property, especially in Kentucky, which was an important breeding state for the south. The Confederate Congress had hoped to lure the border states to them by prohibiting the foreign slave trade, and thus promising them an unimpaired trade in slaves; but railways and commerce had diversified their interests, and secession from the West and from the East offered no advantage. It was easy to retain Delaware, through its geographical position, which really placed it among the North-central States. Maryland remained faithful through its Unionist Governor. Missouri and Kentucky proved more difficult to hold. The line between the North and South was drawn for 1000 miles by the Ohio River, and from a point called Cairo, in Illinois, it ran along another thousand miles down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Kentucky and Missouri lay upon the line of this demarcation. Kentucky stretched from east to west for three-quarters of the Ohio, the opposite bank of which was divided by the states of Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, and Missouri lay along the Mississippi. They were crucial states from a military point of view as well as political.

Lincoln kept his hold on them by two different policies. In Missouri the population was divided on the question of Union or Disunion. The great influx of German immigrants gave that state a decided anti-slavery element, and they formed bands of Union militiamen. The Governor, on the other hand, was for the South, and his answer to Lincoln's request for men showed Southern temper. "Your requisi-

tion," he wrote, "in my judgment is illegal, unconstitutional and revolutionary in its object, inhuman and diabolical, and cannot be complied with." He was forming the state militia into tools for the South. Lincoln arbitrarily destroyed the nucleus of secession by a forced disbanding of the state militia camps with the aid of the Federal troops. These elements of secession enlisted directly in the South, while the Northern sympathizers entered the militia or the United States Army.

In Kentucky the play was somewhat similar, but more cautious. The Governor's answer for troops was a categorical refusal. "Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States." But the Legislature, after a month of struggle, stood for Union, on an understanding between prominent Kentucky citizens and Lincoln that the Loyalists were to be furnished with arms and decisive military support. For many months the people themselves held to the argument that though they were Unionists they neither wished to fight for the North in an aggressive policy against the South, or for the South against the North. They were, they said, in a state of armed neutrality. Meetings of citizens denounced secession, and at the same time denounced Lincoln for attempting to put down secession. One speaker asked: "Why are we fighting? Because Presidents Lincoln and Davis could not settle the etiquette upon which way the troops were to be withdrawn from Fort Sumter." "If we must fight," another speaker said, "let us fight Lincoln and not our Government."

They chose for themselves an impossible position which the trend of events was to sweep away, for the armies had to march across Kentucky to fight in other sections. "The present duty of Kentucky," they said, "is to maintain her independent position, taking sides not with the Administration nor with the seceding states, but with the Union against them both, declaring her soil to be sacred from the hostile tread of either, and if necessary to make the declaration good with her strong right arm."

However, they themselves were soon convinced of the impossibility of neutrality, and in the Congressional elections of 20th June nine out of the ten Congressmen chosen were outspoken Loyalists.

Lincoln, understanding Kentucky much better than did Massachusetts, seemed to the North too slow in his counter-attack upon the South. It is quite true that the fear of offending Kentucky alone tied his hands for many weeks. As someone put it, "Lincoln would like to have had God on his side, but he must have Kentucky."

He not only had to have Kentucky on his side, but he courted and accepted all the non-Republican and Democratic elements that were willing to support the Union, so that we even find Douglas, who had made a bitter Senatorial speech denouncing the attempt to provision Sumter, now that it was an accomplished fact, spending two hours on that memorable Sunday evening after the bombardment, closeted alone with Lincoln. All day the Executive Mansion had been thronged with messengers from the various parties and governors of the states. He accepted all aid.

"The War Democrats," he said, "are just where we Whigs were in 1848 about the Mexican War. The Democrats must vote to hold the Union now, without bothering whether we or the Southern men got things where they are, and we must make it easy for them to do this, for we cannot live through the case without them." He was glad the question as to who commenced the fight was over. It only reminded him, he said, of an Illinois man who was chased by a fierce bull in a pasture, and dodging around a tree caught the tail of the pursuing beast. After pawing the earth for a time, the bull broke away on a run, blowing at every jump, while the man, clinging to its tail, cried: "Darn you, who commenced this fuss?"

His call for seventy-five thousand troops had with it also the order to convene Congress in special session on 4th July. This would necessitate Congressional elections in the border states as well as in the North, and with secession definitely drawn, a new Congress, which would be more sympathetic to the Administration than the old one, brought together under the Buchanan Administration.

Early in the month he suggested to Virginia that if she would adjourn her State Convention, which was debating the question of secession, he would postpone definitely the provisioning of Fort Sumter. But Virginia sent up her loyal men too late for these propositions, and on the 17th, two days after the evacuation of Sumter, she passed her secession ordinance. This left the city of Washington, which lay between Maryland and Virginia, so close to the Confederate line



that its flag could be seen floating from the capitol steps. Washington, whose native population was Southern and not to be trusted, was absolutely unprepared for defence. For two days a hastily-formed company bivouacked in the White House itself, their new sabres shining brilliantly against the rich red pattern of the velvet carpet. The 6th and 8th Massachusetts regiments were marching to Washington, but it took eight days. Hour by hour an attack was expected. Unprepared for war in the very seat of the Government, Lincoln began to show signs of nervousness for the safety of Washington. This was the one question over which he could lose his head. Often he countermanded his Generals' orders, thinking they had not left enough soldiers for the city's protection. In this first week of waiting he said to some soldiers: "I begin to believe that there is no North. The 7th Regiment is a myth. Rhode Island is another." He paced the floor at night, straining his eyes for the expected regiments and repeating to himself: "Why don't they come? Why don't they come?" Finally, on the 25th of April, the Northern soldiers arrived, and amid the cheers of the crowd awaiting them marched up to the White House. Washington, thus for the first time in its history, became the seat of Northern power.

Lincoln was not at all as certain as the country at large that it could be maintained by the show of arms that the seventy-five thousand troops would make. He scanned the military situation very seriously, and asked the General of the Armies, Scott, for a daily memorandum, as early as 1st April, even before the fall of Sumter. That General, too, had a premonition of

the struggle that was to come. His plan was one which had to be adopted in all the earnest of its meaning in the fourth year of the war. It was to throw a cordon of forts between the North and South, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, and combine them with a close coast and river blockade, and virtually throttle the Confederacy. The North laughed, called it Scott's Anaconda, and prepared gaily for the "little holiday jaunt" to "whip the rebs into obedience."

The least warlike of men, and yet the one most prepared at this crisis, Lincoln was not at all anxious to rush into reprisals for the Sumter insult, but was earnestly trying to find some means by which the root of the question could be solved. A show of arms on the one hand, and an offer of indemnity for the slaves on the other, was his plan of procedure. But first of all, before beginning to act, he was anxious to know the temper of the people behind him. Would they support him in a War? In his call for a special Congress he had also called for 400,000 troops and \$400,000. The people returned a Congress which was Republican, Unionist, and anti-slavery, and with an almost childish eagerness to take possession of the fruits of their political victory.

Lincoln, in his message to this Congress, made a careful analysis of the significance of the struggle and of the alignment of forces that were on each side. "This is essentially a people's contest," he said. "On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders;

to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life. Yielding to partial and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the Government for whose existence we contend."

The adversaries, he pointed out, "have adopted some declarations of independence in which, unlike the good old one penned by Jefferson, they omit the words, 'all men are created equal.' Why? They have adopted a temporary national constitution in the preamble of which, unlike our good old one, signed by Washington, they omit 'We, the people,' and substitute 'We, the deputies of the sovereign and independent states.' Why? Why this deliberate pressing out of view of the rights of men and the authority of the people? "

With this appeal to the people who made up the Republican ranks, the small farmer of the West, and the worker and immigrant of the East, seeking for what they called a "fair start" in the new territories, that they stand by him, he still held out the olive branch to the South, promising it that when the rebellion should be suppressed the course of the Government toward the Southern States would be guided by the Constitution and the laws, and there would be no different understanding of its powers and duties than that expressed in his inaugural address. His desire was only to maintain in every state a Republican form of government according to the dictates of the Constitution.

But this last appeal fell on deaf ears both North and South. It was too late for the South to recede, the

plans of the oligarchy were too successful, while the North would never for a moment give its money for anything other than but the absolute control of the territories. At the suggestion of giving its money for the purchase of slaves the anti-slavery factions became suddenly very revolutionary. Emerson wrote: "Pay ransom to the owner, ay! fill it up to the brim! Who is the owner? The slave is owner, and ever was. Pay him."

But who was to pay?

All knew that the strong commercial classes of the East would not. The people were to pay by war. It was not the question of the condition of the negro or the condition of labour that was at stake, but the question of the form of ownership and labour in the new land. Not only would the North not give money to the negro, but it excluded him absolutely from the new territories opened after the war, and refused to go even as far as Russia did in her liberation of the serfs, and give him a strip of land, which, if money were not forthcoming, could have been taken from his erstwhile masters as a war indemnity.

But in paper rights the North had largess, and for the moment it was quite impatient with Lincoln's slowness in reprisals. Congress not only approved of Lincoln's acts, but for the 400,000 men which he asked it gave 500,000, and for the \$400,000 it gave \$500,000. Now the country wanted action. After the secession of Virginia, the Capitol of the Confederacy was moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia. "On to Richmond! On to Richmond!" became the cry. The *Tribune* printed daily in large letters: "The Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on

the 20th of July! By that date the place must be held by the national army."

The "national army" of three-month men was about to be dissolved with nothing done. This, to the excited state of the country, Lincoln knew would not have looked well. Lincoln, who, they say, had a fine eye for military tactics, and who certainly had a fine ear for the voice of politics, did for the first time what he was to do so often in the years of struggle to come—order a general movement of the army on a fixed day. On 9th July an advance must be made against Manassas Junction so that the Potomac would be free for Northern use!

By great exertion, M'Dowell, the General in command, issued his marching orders on 16th July, but even then with an insufficiency of supplies. Three things in M'Dowell's orders were to be held unpardonable: first, to come upon a battery or a breastwork without a knowledge of its position; second, to be surprised; third, to fall back. They came upon the Southern army behind a winding, sluggish stream called Bull Run, three miles in front of Manassas Junction. The two sides began with a few skirmishes, which were to the advantage of the North. For two days the armies did nothing, the Northern army seeking an unfortified crossing over Bull Run. Finally, on the 20th, a ford was found, and it was decided to make an aggressive advance in the morning. The attack was made and the Confederate army fell back. In Washington all was joy. Members of Congress had ridden out to the rear of the lines to watch the battle. Suddenly, in the afternoon, the tide turned. The Confederates were reinforced, and the Northern men, with one

accord, threw down their arms and ran. The next day found them still running, and they did not stop until Washington was reached, thirty miles away.

Lincoln had been spending the day trying to understand the varied telegrams and reports which came in every ten or fifteen minutes. About six in the evening came the despatch announcing the panic and flight. They say he listened in silence, without any change of feature or expression, and then walked away to army headquarters. So often was that hasty, anxious walk repeated in the four years to come! There a telegram from M'Dowell confirmed the disaster. Lincoln went back to the Cabinet room in the White House, and there, lying on the couch, heard the news of the battle from eye-witnesses. All night he was up, listening to reports and making memoranda for future action.

What he had feared in his heart of hearts was to come true. To bring the seceded states back into the Union was not the gay and easy task the North had promised itself. To fight nine million men along a battle-line flung two thousand miles by land and as many by sea needed years and a well-organized equipment. With a heavy heart, and that melancholy which rested with him towards the end, for he felt that by both North and South not a national interest, not even expediency would be sought, but mastery of power, he wrote down his plans for an effective prosecution of the war.

"23rd July 1861.

"1. Let the plan for making the blockade effective be pushed forward with all possible despatch.

"2. Let the volunteer forces at Fort Monroe and vicinity, under General Butler, be constantly drilled, disciplined and instructed, without more for the present.

"3. Let Baltimore be held as now, with a gentle but firm and certain hand.

"4. Let the force now under Patterson or Banks be strengthened and made secure in its position.

"5. Let the forces in Western Virginia act till further orders, according to instructions or orders from General McClellan.

"6. Let General Fremont push forward his organization and operations in the West as rapidly as possible, giving rather special attention to Missouri.

"7. Let the forces late from Manassas, except the three-month men, be reorganized as rapidly as possible in their camps here and about Arlington.

"8. Let the three-month forces who decline to enter the longer service be discharged as rapidly as circumstances will permit.

"9. Let the new volunteer forces be brought forward as fast as possible; and especially into the camps on the two sides of the river here."

On 27th July he added two more suggestions:

"27th July 1861.

"When the foregoing shall have been substantially attended to:

"1. Let Manassas Junction (or some point on one or other of the railroads near it) and Strasburg be seized, and permanently held, with an open line from Washington to Manassas, and an open line from Harper's Ferry to Strasburg—the military men to find the way of doing these.

"2. This done, a joint movement from Cairo on Memphis; and from Cincinnati on East Tennessee."

But not all had the great determination of Lincoln. The failure at Bull Run caused a reaction to the ardour of the North. Already factional criticism ran high.

Stanton, who had been a member of the Buchanan Cabinet, said it was the "painful imbecility of Lincoln" which brought on the struggle. The catastrophe was due to Lincoln's "running the machine for five months." Greeley perhaps expressed the moneyed interests of the East best of all when he advised immediate surrender. After all, the lands of the West would compensate little to the great burden of a war which they feared might fall too heavily on their shoulders. Greeley wrote to Lincoln:

*July 29, 1861, Midnight.*

"DEAR SIR,—This is my seventh sleepless night—yours, too, doubtless—yet I think I shall not die, because I have no right to die. I must struggle to live, however bitterly. But to business. You are not considered a great man, and I am a hopelessly broken one. You are now undergoing a terrible ordeal, and God has thrown the gravest responsibilities upon you. Do not fear to meet them. Can the rebels be beaten after all that has occurred, and in view of the actual state of feeling caused by our late awful disaster? If they can—and it is your business to ascertain and decide—write me that such is your judgment, so that I may know and do my duty. And if they *cannot* be beaten—if our recent disaster is fatal—do not fear to sacrifice yourself to your country. If the rebels are not to be beaten—if that is your judgment in view of all the light you can get—then every drop of blood henceforth shed in this quarrel will be wantonly, wickedly shed, and the guilt will rest heavily on the soul of every promoter of the crime. I pray you to decide quickly and let me know my duty.

"If the Union is irrevocably one, an armistice for thirty,



sixty, ninety, one hundred and twenty days—better still, for a year—ought at once to be proposed, with a view to a peaceful adjustment. Then Congress should call a National Convention, to meet at the earliest possible day. And there should be an immediate and mutual exchange or release of prisoners and a disbandment of forces. I do not consider myself at present a judge of anything but the public sentiment. That seems to me everywhere gathering and deepening against a prosecution of the war. The gloom in this city is funereal—for our dead at Bull Run were many and they lie unburied yet. On every brow sits sullen, scorching, black despair. It would be easy to have Mr Crittenden move any proposition that ought to be adopted, or to have it come from any proper quarter. The first point is to ascertain what is best that can be done—which is the measure of our duty—and do that very thing at the earliest moment.

“ This letter is written in the strictest confidence, and is for your eye alone. But you are at liberty to say to members of your Cabinet that you *know* I will second any move you see fit to make. But do nothing timidly or by halves. Send me word what to do. I will live till I can hear it, at all events. If it is best for the country and for mankind that we make peace with the rebels at once and on their own terms, do not shrink even from that. But bear in mind the greatest truth: ‘ Whoso would lose his life for my sake shall save it.’ Do the thing that is the highest right, and tell me how I am to second you.—Yours in the depths of bitterness,  
HORACE GREELEY.”

The only answer Lincoln made was to dedicate himself and the nation still further to the task before him. With humbleness and prayer he girded his sword. It was no longer a moment for reason; a peculiar mystic faith, a continuous hope rising out of despair, carried him along in the one idea before him now—the Union—

the Union on a Republican basis, the Union of the framers of the Constitution. He did not know and he did not desire those new conceptions and new rights which were to be undertaken before the task to which he had dedicated himself—the conservation of the Union—could be consummated.

Thus for answer, in a spirit of humility and firmness, he sent out a proclamation for a national fast day on the 12th of August, and ordered the nation to fight on.

“Whereas, when our own beloved country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals, to humble ourselves before Him and to pray for His mercy—to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved, that our own arms may be blessed and made effectual for the re-establishment of law, order and peace throughout the wide extent of our country; and that the inestimable boon of civil and religious liberty, earned under His guidance and blessing by the labours and sufferings of our fathers, may be restored in all its original excellence:

“Wherefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do appoint the last Thursday in September next as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation.”

## CHAPTER X

### EMANCIPATION

THE disaster at Bull Run caused the Republican Congress to be wary of its words, and on the 22nd of July, two days later, it passed a resolution to the effect that the war was not prosecuted in any spirit of aggression, or for conquest or subjugation, or for overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions in the states, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union.

Less lenient to the South than Lincoln, it understood that to carry on a civil war for the maintenance of the supremacy of the Constitution and the preservation of the Union it would soon have to interfere with the rights and the established institutions of the hostile states; but leaving that question aside for the moment, it bent all its energies in supporting Lincoln in the war measures he had undertaken. The approval given was a little hesitant and his acts were accepted *in toto* instead of *seriatim*, as he had asked.

The main task was to provide the money for the cost of the war. Here Congress undertook a financial policy which it carried out unflinchingly to the end, the solution of which was to be an issue in American politics for two generations. At the outbreak of the war the National Treasury was less than empty. There was a debt of \$90,000,000, and the Government was running

behind \$25,000,000 annually. Congress immediately passed the long-coveted protective tariffs, and as the manufacturers began to flourish a tax of 3 per cent. was laid on all incomes over \$800, which was all that capital could be made to give during the strain of the whole war. Compared to what the people were to give in men, and in the inflation of prices caused by the issue of paper money and the internal and external taxes and revenues, this one clause shows why war was preferred to the offer of the purchase of slaves. It was cheaper for capitalistic America. To-day, in time of peace, Germany lays a war tax not on incomes but on gross capital.

As the revenue thus obtained was far from sufficient, an internal revenue system was created in 1863, which laid a tax on almost everything that was consumed, bought, sold or owned.

The money raised by the internal revenue and tariff was used to pay current expenses and the interest on the national debt. The gross war expenses were met by selling bonds and the issuance of United States notes, which naturally had to be left to later generations to redeem. The question whether to pay the bonds and notes in gold, silver or paper racked the politics of America up to 1900. Over a million dollars worth of bonds were sold in the four years of the war, bearing a 5, 6 or 7 per cent. interest.

The United States notes were of two kinds. About \$600,000,000 were interest paying; about \$500,000,000 bore no interest, were in denominations of from one dollar up, and were legal tender in the payment of all debts, public or private, except duties on imports and interest on the public debt.

Of course, the issue of paper caused all specie money to disappear down to the smallest fractional silver piece. Postage stamps, cheques, I.O.U. notes, "token" pieces of brass and copper were used; and in 1863, \$50,000,000 in paper fractional currency, in "shin-plasters" as they were called, were authorized.

The high prices caused by inflated money pleased the farmers, and in later years they strenuously opposed any contraction of it. They also opposed the payment of the bonds in gold, demanding that they be paid in paper. This naïve request was later modified to a demand that silver be made legal tender in the payment of all debts, public and private, and that the silver dollar be coined at the ratio of sixteen to one—that is, that the same number of dollars be made out of sixteen pounds of silver as of one pound of gold.

To get more money for the war an attempt was made in 1863 to induce the State banks to buy Government bonds. But the State banks did not do so until 1865, at the close of the war, when a 10 per cent. tax was laid on the amount of paper money each bank issued. In the meantime the banks had issued over \$150,000,000 in 700 different kinds of notes.

Great as the cost of the war was—almost three billions—banks, manufactures and commerce flourished through the war. Boat-builders, iron and steel manufacturers, cloth makers and cotton speculators, all made profits, and as the war dragged itself out year after year the people began to accuse Lincoln and the Administration of prolonging it for the sake of the commercial classes. But, on the face of it, money must be had to carry on the struggle and had to be taken

from wherever it could be obtained. On the question of the distribution of the burden, as on the question of the negro and slavery, Lincoln, of all men, would have liked to have had more justice done, but in the solution of the problems before him he was practical and counted only on self-interest. It was not misanthropy, it was a gentle and forgiving realism—too gentle and too forgiving.

On the question of slavery he showed personal bias which went beyond necessity or expediency. Despite the fact that he came from Illinois his philosophy was border-state. He was born in Kentucky, he had married a Kentuckian, his closest friends came from that state. But in those first two years of war, in the test of strength between the two opposing sections, it was fortunate that the leader of the North had a border-state philosophy. It made the sectional fight appear non-sectional. He was the ideal executive of a materialistic democracy.

The Northern Congress began to attack slavery early in its career. The battle of Bull Run gave them the needed excuse. The Southerners had used their slaves to drive their heavy waggons, to dig the trenches and build the fortifications. On the 6th of August a Confiscation Act was passed, which annulled the property rights of owners over slaves whom they required or permitted to be employed in aid of rebellion.

Lincoln was not pleased with the Bill. He wanted Congress to trust him in the matter, as one who had a wider view, being both military and civil executive. He had written a veto to the measure, but signed it instead, and passed a written argument along with it wherein he suggested various changes.

He tried to mitigate the effects of the Confiscation Act by recommending in his first Annual Message of 3rd December that Congress provide for the colonization of the slaves made free by this act. He could only conceive of the abolition of slavery with the colonization of the negro.

He struggled with this question of emancipation, not only with Congress but with his own generals and Cabinet. The question arose whether the slaves who ran away for protection, from the Confederate armies or from their masters, to the camps of the North, were to be kept or returned. Each general decided this problem according to his own predilection. The generals, hostile to slavery, kept them on the ground that they were "contrabands of war," and the phrase, "a contraband arrived," etc., became common in war dispatches. The other generals, even those mildly favourable to slavery, drove them from the camps or sent them back to their owners.

Early in the war Lincoln sent an indirect communication to General M'Dowell, asking, "Would it not be well to allow the owners to bring back those 'fugitive slaves' which have crossed the Potomac with our troops?" He asked also that this communication be kept secret, for he did not wish that his name should be brought before the public in connection with this delicate subject at this time.

But his position on this "delicate subject" was soon to be forced into the open by John C. Frémont, who had been the Republican Presidential candidate in the previous campaign, and whom Lincoln now made Major-General in the Regular Army, and to whom he had

assigned command of the Western Department. Frémont had no sooner reached St Louis than he placed the whole state of Missouri under martial law, declaring the property of all persons who were active enemies of the United States, or who had taken up arms against it, to be confiscated, and their slaves, if they had any, emancipated. Lincoln wrote Frémont privately, asking him to revoke the proclamation on the ground that it "will alarm our Southern friends and turn them against us; perhaps ruin our rather fair prospect for Kentucky." In principle, too, he wrote to his friend Browning, he was against emancipation by proclamation, as it was a matter "purely political and not within the range of military law or necessity. . . . If the general needs them (the slaves) he can seize them and use them; but when the need is past it is not for him to fix their permanent future condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamation. . . . What I object to is that I, as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the Government."

Frémont refused to revoke his proclamation, on the ground that it would be bad discipline to appear so vacillating before his soldiers, and so forced Lincoln to revoke it publicly. This was a shrewd political stroke on Frémont's part, for it brought a storm of disapproval around Lincoln's head and turned Frémont into a popular idol with the radicals. Frémont remained their political idol unto the very last and was nominated by them as opposition candidate to Lincoln in 1864.

But Lincoln, arch-executive that he was, had only



one purpose—to preserve the Union as he found it. In January the Secretary of War, Cameron, in issuing his annual report, recommended emancipation and the arming of negroes. The report was already in the hands of the post-masters when Lincoln hastily recalled it by telegraph.

In the following May, four months before the issue of his own preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, he still held back the army by main force from stating openly what in the nature of things was taking place, that wherever the Northern armies came in contact with the slaves they had to set them free. For as the Northern armies had to take the provision trains of the South if they came upon them, so they had to keep the runaway slaves who came to them.

Nevertheless Lincoln even at this late date dared create a situation similar in effect to the one with Frémont. General Hunter, commanding in South Carolina, issued a virtual emancipation proclamation which Lincoln again publicly revoked and repudiated.

But, hold back the North as he would, in the hope that the seceded states, realizing that in truth "the Government will not assail them," might find secession difficult to maintain, and one by one return to the fold, he could do nothing those first two years which would cause secession to surrender. One decisive battle might have brought about this result, but the years followed the months and the one decisive battle never came.

It could not come. Both sides were rich and strong, the theatre of the war was vast; tens of thousands were pitched against tens of thousands, and

victories were so costly that they amounted to defeats. It was only by the slow crushing of each separate section that the North won.

In the search for a general who would lead them to victory, the country fixed upon General M'Clellan, who even before Bull Run had had several engagements upon a small scale in Western Virginia, where the sympathies of the people were with the Union, and these had resulted in giving the upper sources of the Potomac and the Ohio Rivers to the Unionists. And so M'Clellan, the "Young Napoleon," was called to take command of the Army of the Potomac, which had suffered such defeat under M'Dowell.

The "Young Napoleon" showed splendid qualities as an organizer, moulding the raw recruits into fine shape, but as a fighter "he had the slows," as Lincoln put it. In the days when the country looked for victories he stayed in camp, urging the Government continually for more men and more supplies, so fearful of defeat that he moved not at all until Lincoln had to ask him if he really thought the other side was so much better equipped than he. Finally, in October, the army set on its march, but because of some vague order, a detachment of about two thousand men was sent unaided into the Confederate lines, and there it was surrounded and almost entirely lost. Compared to the army that rested behind it, the loss was insignificant, but the effect on the North was most discouraging.

Carping criticism of the Administration began again and ended this time only with the end of the war. The effect on M'Clellan was to make him the more obdurate and impervious to all urgings to move. The

winter wore away into the spring and nothing was done. "The sky and earth seem to beckon the army," said Lincoln, but he supposed General M'Clellan knew his business and had his reasons for disregarding these hints of Providence. "If M'Clellan can't fish," he observed, "he ought to cut bait at a time like this." Often he remarked bitterly that if the Commander had no use for his army he would like to "borrow it."

Finally he ordered a forward movement on 22nd February, which is the birthday of George Washington and is celebrated as a national holiday. But even this appeal to patriotism had no effect, and on 9th March the Confederates withdrew from their position on the Potomac, feeling that they were unable to hold it. This proof of the needlessness of M'Clellan's caution so enraged the North that two days later Lincoln removed him from command of the United States armies, but he still held his post as Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

About this time more encouraging news was coming from the West. Side campaigns in the previous autumn and winter had secured for the Federal power the greater part of Missouri and Kentucky, and on 6th March 1862 a severe engagement at Pea Ridge in North-western Arkansas, placed that region and the whole of Missouri under its control. A month earlier an actual invasion of the seceded states had been begun. A land force, under Ulysses S. Grant, and a fleet of gun-boats under Commodore Foote, moved up the Tennessee, and on 6th February Foote captured Fort. Henry and Grant, moving immediately over to the Cumberland, after three days of fighting, captured Fort Donelson on the now

famous terms of "unconditional and immediate surrender." Then a Federal force under Pope, also supported by gun-boats, cleared the Mississippi with great difficulty at New Madrid and Island Number Ten.

For the purpose of securing the Mississippi Valley and opening the river, Grant advanced up the Tennessee to reach Corinth, a railway centre of Northern Mississippi. At Pittsburg landing he was checked and driven back, but, reinforcements arriving next day, he reached Corinth, settled down to a siege, and on the 30th of May 1862 took it. Memphis then fell and the river was open as far south as Vicksburg.

It had been open below Vicksburg by the surrender of New Orleans on 24th April. Commodore Farragut had begun the bombardment of the forts below New Orleans, but, unable to make headway, he ran his ships past the deadly fire on the 24th, and with the assistance of General Butler, who had command of the land force, the city was captured, and on 1st May actual possession of it took place.

But these successes in no way mitigated the despair that the repeated failures in the East caused. The proximity of the two Capitols made them harbour the delusion that if the Northern armies could but cross the line and capture Richmond secession would be ended with one stroke. Moreover, it caused a continual nervousness lest the Confederates reach Washington and sack that city. More than one detachment was held back from a forward march on Richmond in the fear that Washington was insufficiently guarded.

For a while, after M'Clellan had been degraded in rank, the Secretary of War, Stanton (Cameron had been

removed for incompetency), was practically Commander-in-Chief. M'Clellan, in the spring, against the advice of Lincoln and almost everyone else, chose the old Revolutionary fighting ground, the peninsula between the York and the James Rivers, for his attack upon Richmond. This route was more expensive in time and money than the more direct one by land to Manassas Junction, and in case of disaster more difficult to retreat. He spent a month besieging Yorktown, but the Confederates evacuated it, and M'Clellan, though he pursued and fought them at Williamsburg, could not prevent them crossing the Chickahominy, and so gained nothing. In fact, before his troops were half over Fair Oaks he was attacked by Johnston, and with difficulty the men were kept from panic and flight. M'Clellan had expected to be reinforced by M'Dowell, but he was kept to defend Washington, General Jackson ("Stonewall" Jackson, who received the fond title by his stand against the charges of the Unionists at Bull Run) having suddenly appeared in the Shenandoah Valley and cleared it of Federal troops. Having succeeded in dividing M'Clellan's forces by his feint against Washington, Jackson now wheeled about and joined Lee, who was in command of the Confederate troops, for General Johnston had been wounded, and together they hammered at M'Clellan for seven days, forcing him to the James River. The capture of Richmond was not so simple a matter after all.

M'Clellan was here practically deprived of his command and most of his men given to General Pope, and the experiment with Stanton as Commander-in-Chief not being very happy, Halleck, who had gained for himself

the honours in the West due to Grant, was made Commander-in-Chief. General Pope fared even worse than M'Clellan. On 9th August 1862 "Stonewall" Jackson, by a forced march through the mountains, turned his flank and defeated General Banks in command of the western end of his line at Cedar Mountain, and on 29th August Pope's forces were attacked at Groveton, and on the 30th routed at Bull Run, by Lee and Jackson. A force captured Harper's Ferry with its arsenal and supplies and 11,000 Federal troops.

The North was terrified. Washington was again open to attack, and Lincoln, on his own initiative, recalled M'Clellan, for though the Government and the North distrusted him, the soldiers loved him. His organizing still was needed and he was reinstated on 2nd September.

Lee crossed the Upper Potomac and entered Maryland, and M'Clellan met him at Antietam Creek on 17th September. The battle fought was so indecisive, the losses on both sides so great, that Lee withdrew across the Potomac to his base of operations. Lincoln urged for over a month that M'Clellan follow Lee and break his communication with Richmond; but he had his old failing, "the slows." He was removed, permanently this time, and his command given to General Burnside.

Lincoln, who had written privately to the Governors in July, "If I had 50,000 additional troops here now I believe I could substantially close the war in two weeks," was forced at last to give up his hope of a restoration of the Union "with few eggs broken," and had to consent to the prosecution of the war on the basis of a Northern conquest.

Not only was his position of fighting and yet having very little to fight over becoming equivocal at home, but in foreign relations his position was an untenable one for a struggle lasting so long a time. The Governments and upper classes of France and England showed from the first a decided tendency toward Southern sympathy. It was with difficulty that recognition of the South was prevented. Before the new Ambassador to London, Charles Francis Adams, had time to arrive, England had declared herself a neutral in the struggle between the North and South, and thus, by giving the South belligerent rights, she bestowed a quasi-recognition upon it.

The dispatch which Secretary Seward sent to Adams concerning this matter has become famous because of the modifications Lincoln made. Seward, whose panacea for the ensuing struggle was a foreign war, sent an aggressively hostile letter to Adams for him to deliver to the English Government.

Lincoln, though untrained in diplomacy, knew the delicate shading of language, and he drew his pen through whole paragraphs, or changed a word like "wrongful" to "hurtful," or the phrase, "no one of these proceedings will be borne" to "will pass unquestioned." The open threat of war in case Great Britain recognized the Confederacy he omitted entirely.

But hostile feeling existed between both countries and only a spark was needed to kindle a fire. The spark was given when, a few months after the disaster at Bull Run, the country relieved its feelings in a general rejoicing over a very doubtful exploit. The Confederate Commissioners to England and France, J. M. Mason

and John Slidell, ran the Federal blockade at Charleston, South Carolina, successfully, and embarked at Havana on the steamer *Trent* for England. On 8th November she was boarded by Captain Wilkes of the American man-of-war, *San Jacinto*, and the two Commissioners taken from her and carried prisoners to Fort Warren in Boston Harbour. The North went wild with joy, banquets were given to Wilkes, while Lincoln was heard to mutter something about the prisoners "proving white elephants yet."

England immediately demanded reparation and the release of the prisoners, and without waiting for a reply sent troops to Canada and prepared for war.

This "*Trent* Affair" made a very painful impression on both sides of the Atlantic, and the hostility of feeling once started was slow to wear off. Much against popular approval the Commissioners were released, for Lincoln was too good an executive to heed a popular outcry which had no permanent meaning. "One war at a time," he told the North, and with this ambiguous offer to their war spirit he bridged the crisis which undoubtedly would have resulted in the immediate recognition of the South.

But the danger of intervention was never over. Friction between England and the United States arose again the second summer of the war over the escape to the open sea of the *Alabama*, one of the "commerce destroyers" of the Confederacy, which had been built at Liverpool and permitted to leave against the protests of the American Ambassador.

At home, too, events were driving Lincoln to a change of policy. The moment had come when recruiting



became more and more difficult, and the North wished to fight only on its own terms. Lincoln could not keep revoking the emancipation proclamations of his generals much longer, nor could he continue vetoing the radical measures of the Republican Congress on the subject of slavery. In the first flush of its victory it had passed the long-sought-for Homestead Bill, which offered portions of the public domain to heads of families at a nominal fee, and had given a charter to the Union Pacific Railway with huge grants of land and money from the Federal Government. Bills were brought in as early as 1861 for the repeal or the modification of the Fugitive Slave Law and for the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia. Another Bill asked Congress to abolish slavery in all states which had seceded, for it was argued that they had forfeited the right of statehood by secession and therefore were to be considered territories which the United States had ordained to be free by special ordinance. This Bill was not passed, but the argument of the reduction of the states to territories was very important, for it was destined to come up again in the question of reconstruction. By March 1862 Congress had forbidden the officers of the Army and Navy to return escaped slaves to their masters, and in June slavery was prohibited in all the territories held at that time or which might be acquired in the future. This was the realization of the prime article in the platform of the Republican Party and once and for all overthrew the Dred Scott decision.

Lincoln endorsed all the Bills that Congress passed relative to slavery or land in the territories, but he threw his whole influence against interfering with

slavery in the states, except with compensation to the owner and colonization for the negro. He was disturbed at the Bill for the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia, though it included both his ideas of compensation and colonization. Compensation was offered to loyal owners at a maximum rate of \$300 a slave, and colonization to Haiti or Liberia at a cost not exceeding \$100 to any coloured person who wished to go.

His recommendation for compensation had already passed Congress in the spring of 1862. He was troubled over the constitutionality of the process. He did not assume, he said in his message in March, that Congress or he had the power to proceed in this question without the consent of the states involved. He put his recommendation in the form of a resolution which read: "Resolved that the United States ought to co-operate with any state which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such state pecuniary aid, to be used by such state in its discretion to compensate for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system." He used all the persuasive power at his command to make this resolution acceptable. He called the representatives of the border-states to him and explained the advantages of the Bill to them. They said nothing at the time, but the answers which they gave later were almost all unfavourable. They were unwilling to perform of themselves that which Congress and the President admitted they could not constitutionally force them to do.

In revoking General Hunter's Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln, who had a gift of finding opportunities to lay his case before the people, took occasion

to appeal again to the border-states to accept compensated abolishment. "I do not argue—I beseech you to make arguments for yourselves. You cannot, if you would, be blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and large consideration of them, ranging if it may be far above personal and partisan politics. This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the Pharisee. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time, as in the providence of God it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it."

In July, with the Emancipation Proclamation already formulated in his mind, Lincoln again asked the representatives of the border-states to a conference on compensated emancipation. He urged them to accept it as an act of patriotism. "It would be the most swift and potent means of ending it (the war). Let the states which are in rebellion see definitely and certainly that in no event will the states you represent ever join their proposed Confederacy and they cannot much longer maintain the contest. But you cannot divest them of their hope to ultimately have you with them so long as you show a determination to perpetuate the institution within your own states. Beat them at elections, as you have overwhelmingly done, and, nothing daunted, they still claim you as their own. You and I know what the lever of their power is. Break that lever before their faces and they can shake you no more forever." He told them plainly that "the incidents of war cannot be

avoided . . . the institution in your states will be extinguished by mere friction and abrasion;" and more, that he could no longer afford to give offence to the elements who were supporting him and who were pressing in the direction of immediate emancipation.

Of his own contemplated step in that direction he told no one. His appeal to the border-states fell on deaf ears, but the appeals to him by the Abolitionists and radicals he also seemingly disregarded.

In the dark summer of 1862, when there was a general hopelessness in the field and a great danger of Republican losses in the elections, he matured his plan for a general military emancipation. He called his Cabinet and read the Proclamation, saying that he had made up his mind about it and only wanted to hear what each member thought. The Cabinet all disapproved, but Lincoln said he was determined. The only question discussed was when to read it. Seward thought it best to wait until the North had won some victory, so as not to have it seem a gesture of despair. "Yes," said Lincoln, "that is a good idea. Otherwise it might sound like our last shriek on the retreat."

On 20th August, when military reverses seemed to sweep this paper yet farther away, Horace Greeley signed an editorial in the *Tribune*, which he called "The Prayer of Twenty Million," asking for the immediate abolition of negro slavery. Lincoln, glad of the opportunity to speak to the people, answered, reminding them of their duty, and though revealing his purpose in the war, never admitted that he contemplated emancipation.

“ I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored the nearer the Union will be the Union as it was. If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the coloured race I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.”

To the delegations that came to him demanding a general proclamation of abolition he denied that it would be of any good, for it would only affect the states in rebellion, where he had little power, and be, as he said, like “ a pope’s bull against a comet.” Nevertheless, he held just such a document ready to be issued at the first favourable moment. Finally, on 17th September 1862, the battle of Antietam was won by M’Clellan. It was hardly a victory, for 10,000 lay dead on either side, and instead of following up the enemy M’Clellan fell back to rest; yet Lincoln took this occasion, since it was the only one he had, to send forth his Emancipation Proclamation. It read as follows:

“ I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy

thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that hereafter as heretofore the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relations between the United States and each of the states and the people thereof, in which states that relation is or may be suspended or disturbed. That it is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress, to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure, tendering pecuniary aid to the free acceptance or rejection of all the slave states, so-called, the people whereof may not then be in rebellion against the United States, and which states may then have voluntarily adopted, or thereafter may voluntarily adopt, the immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits; and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon this continent or elsewhere, with the previously-obtained consent of the Governments existing there, will be continued. That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, henceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom. That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the states, or parts of states, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any state, or the people thereof, shall, on that day, be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections, wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such state shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong, countervailing testimony, be deemed

conclusive evidence that such state, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.

“ And I do hereby enjoin upon and order all persons engaged in the military and naval service of the United States to observe, obey and enforce, within their respective spheres of service, the acts and sections above recited. And the Executive will, in due time, recommend that all citizens of the United States, who shall have remained loyal thereto throughout the rebellion, shall, upon the restoration of the constitutional relations between the United States and the people, if that relation shall have been suspended or disturbed, be compensated for all losses by acts of the United States, including the loss of slaves.”

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW RECKONING

THE preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was received with joy in most Republican quarters; meetings were held in celebration of it; but the people at large found a war which fell heavily on them in men and money so heavy a burden that this advance in political morality made slight impression. The twenty months of war had brought out all the young men who were willing to go as volunteers. To continue the war a forced conscription was necessary to call forth the serious members of the population who were not so eager to hail the negro as their brother at the cost of their lives.

Lincoln himself was doubtful of the effect of Emancipation, and the decline in the Bourse and in the Republican majorities of the October elections verified his fears. The Republican representatives dropped from a majority of seventy-two to forty-six, and in New York a Democratic Governor was elected, who by his power over levies of recruits could hinder and checkmate the task in Washington.

Lincoln looked to Emancipation to perform two services, which it ultimately did. First and paramount was the adding of coloured troops to fill up the constantly-opening gaps in the army; the second was to place the struggle on a moral basis and prevent foreign



intervention. This last danger was narrowly averted in the year 1863.

Except as pointing to a future policy the form of the Emancipation did not entirely please the radicals of the country, yet it had the merit of drawing them to Lincoln's side. It was truly a pope's bull against a comet. It emancipated where it had no power, and did not release where it had. It was tardy in coming and it did not revive the war spirit. Fortunately it was not promulgated for that purpose.

Among the Democrats it enhanced the disaffection which was already beginning to be felt. The West was the special field of this anti-war spirit, and so strong had it grown that there was talk of a North-western Confederacy, and the South made plans in earnest for a union with this section. "Copperhead" was the popular name for these anti-war Democrats, and they formed secret societies in aid of deserters and carried on a systematic propaganda against recruiting, which the unpopularity of the war had caused to stop almost entirely.

By March 1863, after a winter's wrangle in Congress, a stringent Draft Act was passed, which provided for conscription by lot, and on the same day Lincoln was authorized to suspend the writ of Habeas Corpus in cases of persons suspected of disaffection towards the Union. This he had done since his first call for volunteers in April 1861, but by martial law.

The forced conscription and the suspension of the writ of Habeas Corpus inflamed copperheadism. In the Eastern States conscription provoked resistance. It was asserted that the officers in charge of the arrange-

ments for the conscription acted in a partisan manner, making the heaviest levies upon counties and districts which were Democratic, but the underlying cause was the too great burden of the war. The discontent was manipulated into expressions of race-prejudice. Anti-draft riots took place in many cities, the most formidable being in the city of New York, where for four days the city was given over to a mob which first destroyed the deputy provost-marshal's headquarters, and then hanged negroes on the street corners.

Lincoln used his inimitable tact to mitigate the hardships of conscription. In Pennsylvania, where a band called the "Molly Maguires" threatened open rebellion, he sent a verbal message to Colonel M'Clure, Chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate, that he was very desirous to have the laws executed, "but it might be well in an extreme emergency to be content with the appearance of executing the laws." The hint was taken and the quotas were allowed to be filled by volunteers who had enlisted in other towns or cities outside of the most troublesome township, and the danger in Pennsylvania was averted. In the fall a war Governor was re-elected.

The richer classes avoided the conscription by having the states and districts pass bounty laws whereby they could buy men to fill up their places in the quotas. Usually the bounty was \$300.

But for the common people the draft was hard to bear, and it had to be carried on in the West and in the East at the point of the bayonet. Deserters in the army itself were numerous. In the spring 3000 officers

and 80,000 privates were absent from the Army of the Potomac alone, for reasons unknown.

The war had necessitated the governing of the country by the War Department instead of the Constitution. All telegraph wires centred in the room of the Secretary of War, and there was a common saying that that gentleman had but to touch a bell and the arrest of any person at the uttermost edge of the vast Republic would be consummated. Speech and the press were censured and the suspension of the writ of Habeas Corpus fell on men prominent in politics and letters.

The agitation against the war finally culminated in the famous Vallandigham case. Here Lincoln, by applying the principle that "it might be well in an extreme emergency to be content with the appearance of executing the laws," and by again using his talent of speaking to the people, succeeded in smoothing over what might have proved a serious disaffection.

An Ohio Democrat, Vallandigham, had made so fervent an anti-war speech that he was arrested by General Burnside and sentenced to imprisonment in a fortress. At this a storm of protest swept over the country. Lincoln seems to have doubted the expediency of any arrest whatever, but he sustained it after it happened, except that he changed the sentence from imprisonment to exile to the South. This form of martyrdom struck the humour of the American people. The Confederates were not over-anxious for their guest, but they decided to receive him as a transient alien, and escorted him to Charleston, South Carolina. From thence he sailed to Canada and re-entered Ohio, and the Democrats nominated him for Governor of the State as a

protest against the war and the Administration. It was decided officially to ignore his activities in Ohio, and this policy was vindicated at the election, where Vallandigham lost by a hundred thousand majority.

Lincoln in the meantime had used his opportunity to address himself to the people. A Vallandigham meeting was held in New York, which was attended by the newly-elected Democratic Governor of the State himself, who denounced the arrest as dishonourable despotism. "The action of the Administration," he said, "will determine in the minds of more than one-half of the people of the loyal states whether this war is waged to put down rebellion in the South or to destroy free institutions in the North."

Lincoln answered this meeting, and his argument that he was saving the boys in the army struck home.

"I understand the meeting whose resolution I am considering to be in favour of suppressing the rebellion by military force—by armies. Long experience has shown that armies cannot be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. The case requires, and the law and the Constitution sanction, this punishment. Shall I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? This is none the less injurious when effected by getting a father, a brother or friend into a public meeting and there working upon his feelings till he is persuaded to write the soldier boy that he is fighting in a bad cause for a wicked Administration of a contemptible Government, too weak to arrest and punish him if he shall desert. I think that, in such a case, to silence the

agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional but withal a great mercy. . . . Nor am I able to appreciate the danger apprehended by this meeting that the American people will, by means of military arrests during the rebellion, lose the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and the press, the law of evidence, trial by jury and Habeas Corpus throughout the indefinite peaceful future which I trust lies before them, any more than I am able to believe that a man could contract so strong an appetite for emetics during temporary illness as to persist in feeding upon them during the remainder of his natural life."

Disaffection went so far that it was reflected in Congress and Lincoln was on the verge of a Cabinet crisis. The conservatives were against Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, on the ground that he was too radical, and the radicals were against Seward, the Secretary of State, on the ground that he was too conservative. The result was an actual demand by a caucus of Senators that Seward be removed. This was modified to a request that Lincoln make changes in his Cabinet. Lincoln invited both the Committee and the Cabinet on one and the same evening, and they met, to the surprise of each, to hear each other's incriminations. Seward had already sent in his resignation, and the result of the evening's meeting was the resignation of Chase. Lincoln received it a little hastily, then with a sigh of relief tore up the resignations of both men. "Now," he said, "I can ride. I have a pumpkin in each bag."

He was much more in sympathy with Seward's conservatism than with Chase's radicalism, but he

needed both men for the "balancing of matters," which was a favourite phrase of his. It was no time to show weakness by making changes in the Government.

The immediate problem before him was to persist in the prosecution of the war. This was no easy matter, with copperheadism and various other parties clamouring for peace, and a people heavily burdened by taxes and the draft. If he could not approach the rich, who had protected their property with a three per cent. tax and their lives by bounty laws, he went still further down in the strata of society and called upon the "cause of the war to be the material for its own destruction"—he called upon the newly-freed slaves to carry arms for their country.

Thus, on the 14th of January, we find him writing to General Dix a letter marked "Private and Confidential," in which he says: "The Proclamation has been issued; we were not succeeding—at best were progressing too slowly—without it. Now that we have it, and bear all the disadvantages of it (as we do bear some in certain quarters), we must also take some benefit from it, if practicable. I therefore will thank you for your well-considered opinion whether Fortress Monroe and Yorktown, one or both, could not in whole or in part be garrisoned by coloured troops, leaving the white forces now necessary at those places to be employed elsewhere."

All through the spring he kept up a continuous propaganda for the raising of coloured troops. In March he wrote to Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee, who was later Vice-President under him, and President after his assassination:

“ I am told you have at least thought of raising a negro military force. In my opinion the country now needs no specific thing so much as some man of your ability and position to go to this work. When I speak of your position I mean that of an eminent citizen of a slave state and himself a slave-holder. The coloured population is the great available and yet unavailed of force for restoring the Union. The bare sight of 50,000 armed and drilled black soldiers upon the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once; and who doubts that we can present that sight if we but take hold in earnest? If you have been thinking of it, please do not dismiss the thought.”

The South, in a rage, threatened extermination and massacre, but the value of these soldiers was too great to desist because of the prejudice that had to be overcome. The Confederate Secretary of War suggested to General Kirby Smith that white men leading negro troops “ be dealt with red-handed on the field of war or immediately after.” Lincoln in turn promised extra protection for these troops, and after the summer victories he sent an order that “ for every soldier of the United States killed in violation of the laws of the war a rebel soldier shall be executed.” This order was never carried out, but it shows to what extent the precautions for the safety of the coloured troops had to be taken, and even so massacres were not prevented. On 1st April he put the case before General Hunter in this wise:

“ I am glad to see the accounts of your coloured force at Jacksonville, Florida. I see the enemy are driving at them fiercely, as is to be expected. It is important to the enemy that such a force shall not

take shape and grow and thrive in the South, and in precisely the same proportion it is important to us that it shall. Hence the utmost caution and vigilance is necessary on our part. The enemy will make extra efforts to destroy them, and we should do the same to preserve and increase them."

Yet the North itself, willing on the whole to make use of this new war material, was unwilling to place it on an equal footing with the white soldier. There were objections to the negro being put in the same uniform as the white and to his being given promotions or equal pay. A point in his favour was gained when the idea of the same uniform finally prevailed and Lincoln promised he would see justice done in the matter of promotions, but as to equal pay—"some concession must be made to prejudice," he said, and besides, "it was not proved that the negro could make as good a soldier as the white man." The negroes, rather than be so humiliated, gave their life's-blood in the defence of their country without any pay whatever. In this their families, who were homeless and without work and who depended on the pay for bread, stood loyally by the men in the fields, until the country, grown respectful of this self-respect, paid in full what it owed them.

By the end of the year Lincoln could write in his Annual Message to Congress:

"Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion, fully one hundred thousand are now in the United States military service, about one-half of which number actually bear arms in the ranks; thus giving the double advantage of taking so much labour from the insurgent cause and supplying the places which



otherwise must be filled with so many white men. So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any. No servile insurrection, or tendency to violence or cruelty, has marked the measures of emancipation among the blacks. These measures have been much discussed in foreign countries, and contemporary with such discussion the tone of public sentiment there is much improved. At home the same measures have been fully discussed, supported, criticised, denounced, and the annual elections following are highly encouraging to those whose official duty it is to bear the country through this great trial. Thus we have the new reckoning. The crisis which threatened to divide the Union is past."

By the following April 130,000 soldiers, seamen and labourers were in the service.

In the South a rigorous conscription had begun a year before the Northern Draft Act, in April 1862. It forced all males between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five into the service, and in September of that year it was extended to include all males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

Towards the end of the war conscription included boys of sixteen and seventeen and old men, and a resolution was passed to enlist the negro population. This last plan came too late in the war to be tried, but slaves had served the army from the very first as labourers upon the fortifications, as teamsters, hostlers, cooks and body-servants. Whether they could have been made to fight for their masters with gun in hand was not put to the test.

The strain of the internal war was made trebly

difficult this year for the Federal Government by the strain of foreign relations. Though it was true that "the tone of public sentiment" was much improved in foreign countries by the discussion of the emancipation measures, yet the improvement cannot be laid wholly to that cause.

The English upper classes, and for a while the Government, seemed in sympathy with the Southern Confederacy, but the bulk of English trade was with the North, and England had nothing to gain from a recognition of the Southern Confederacy. The cotton mills in England were closed in 1861 and 1862 and the spinners were told that the closed mills were due to the American blockade. In reality the mills would have been closed under any circumstances, because of a glut of cotton goods in China and India. By the time the cotton market had righted itself, Egypt, Syria and Brazil were furnishing their cotton to the mills of England.

In the autumn of 1862 the danger of recognition was at its height. It was at this time that Gladstone made his famous Newcastle speech, in which he said that "Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army, they are making, it appears, a navy, and they have made, what is more than either, they have made a nation." Though it was said with less forethought than the Northern States attributed to him, he could not have said it unless the Government had been very close to intervention of some kind.

Both Palmerston and Russell were ready to propose intervention after Pope's defeat at the second battle of Bull Run in August 1862.

The edict of freedom in January made a favourable impression upon the workers of England, but the preliminary proclamation of September was hardly appreciated. The governing classes saw in it only an attempt to incite servile insurrection, and even Bright, as late as December, in his speech of that day, made no allusion to it. But on 14th October it was announced that the Government did not intend to interfere. The determining factor was Seward's letter to Adams of 2nd August, in which he said:

"If Great Britain shall in any way approach you, directly or indirectly, with propositions which assume or contemplate an appeal to the President on the subject of our internal affairs, whether it seem to imply a purpose to dictate or to mediate, or to advise or even to solicit or persuade, you will answer that you are forbidden to debate, to hear or in any way receive, entertain or transmit any communication of the kind.

"If the British Government, either alone or in combination with any other Government, should acknowledge the insurgents . . . you will immediately suspend the exercise of your functions and give notice of that suspension to Earl Russell and to this Department."

This letter was shown to Forster. Its firm tone and the certainty that war would ensue made the Government desist from following the lead of what Palmerston called the "eager money-making spirit of British merchants and shipbuilders."

The crushing defeat at Fredericksburg in December confirmed all Europe in the belief that the cause of the North was hopeless. Louis Napoleon, who had

taken advantage of the lull in the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine to manipulate affairs in the Mexican Republic by setting up a throne for the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, now (on 9th January 1863) offered mediation, but in a friendly and courteous tone. This was as politely and courteously declined on 3rd February.

The distress in the cotton-manufacturing districts of France was as acute as that of England, but the people of France and England stood solidly for the cause of free labour.

When the January edict appeared mass meetings were held in every manufacturing centre in England. In Manchester 6000 operatives hailed the "dawn of the New Year as the beginning of an epoch of universal freedom upon the Western Continent and of closer friendship between the people of England and America."

To which Lincoln replied, on 19th January, making a careful exposition of his cause:

#### "TO THE WORKING-MEN OF MANCHESTER

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the address and the resolutions which you sent me on the eve of the New Year. When I came, on the 4th of March 1861, through a free and constitutional election, to preside in the government of the United States, the country was found on the verge of civil war. Whatever might have been the cause, or whosoever the fault, one duty paramount to all others was before me, namely, to maintain and preserve at once the Constitution and the integrity of the Federal Republic. A conscientious purpose to perform this duty is the key to all the measures of administration which have

been and to all which will hereafter be pursued. Under our frame of government and my official oath I could not depart from this purpose if I would. It is not always in the power of Governments to enlarge or restrict the scope of moral results which follow the policies that they may deem it necessary for the public safety to adopt.

"I have understood well that the duty of self-preservation rests solely with the American people. But I have, at the same time, been aware that favour or disfavour of foreign nations might have a material influence in enlarging or prolonging the struggle with disloyal men in which the country is engaged. A fair examination of history has seemed to authorize the belief that the past actions and influences of the United States were generally regarded as having been beneficial to mankind. I have, therefore, reckoned on the forbearance of nations. Circumstances—to some of which you kindly allude—induce me especially to expect that if justice and good faith should be practised by the United States they would encounter no hostile influence on the part of Great Britain. It is now a pleasant duty to acknowledge the demonstration you have given of your desire that a spirit of amity and peace toward this country may prevail in the councils of your Queen, who is respected and esteemed in your own country only more than she is by the kindred nation which has its home on this side of the Atlantic.

"I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the working-men of Manchester, and in all Europe, are called to endure in this crisis. It has been often and studiously represented that the attempt to overthrow this Government, which was built on the foundation of human rights, and to substitute for it one which should rest exclusively on the basis of human slavery, was likely to obtain the favour of Europe. Through the actions of our disloyal citizens the working-men of Europe have been subjected to severe trials, for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that

attempt. Under the circumstances, I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism, which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country. It is indeed an energetic and reinspiring assurance of the inherent power of truth and of the ultimate and universal triumph of justice, humanity and freedom. I do not doubt that the sentiments you have expressed will be sustained by your great nation; or, on the other hand, I have no hesitation in assuring you that they will excite admiration, esteem and the most reciprocal feelings of friendship among the American people. I hail this interchange of sentiment as an augury that whatever else may happen, whatever misfortune may befall your country, as my own, the peace and friendship which now exists between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them, perfected."

All through January and February there were demonstrations the like of which had not been seen since the abolition of the Corn Laws. Even in Liverpool, where the shipbuilding interests made the city pro-Southern, a reaction in Northern favour had set in, and the President was addressed with "respectful sympathy."

In Bradford, Yorkshire, a resolution was passed that "any intervention, physical or moral, on behalf of the slave power would be immoral." On 29th January a large overflow meeting, "crowded with workers and scholars," was held in Exeter Hall, in London, at which the name of Lincoln was cheered and cheered again.

On 2nd February Lincoln again answered the address of a New Year's meeting in London, held in celebration of the proclamation:

## " TO THE WORKING-MEN OF LONDON

" I have received the New Year's address which you have sent me, with a sincere appreciation of the exalted and humane sentiments by which it was inspired.

" As these sentiments are manifestly the enduring supports of the free institutions of England, so I am sure also that they constitute the only reliable basis for institutions throughout the world.

" The resources, advantages and powers of the American people are very great, and they have consequently succeeded to equally great responsibilities. It seems to have devolved upon them to test whether a Government established upon the principles of human freedom can be maintained against an effort to build one upon the exclusive foundation of human bondage. They will rejoice with me in the new evidences which your proceedings furnish that the magnanimity they are exhibiting is justly estimated by the true friends of freedom and humanity in foreign countries.

" Accept my best wishes for your individual welfare, and for the welfare and happiness of the whole British people."

But by March 1863 the situation with England again looked grave. Two ships, the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, which had been built in Liverpool for the Southern Confederacy the year before, and had been manned by British seamen and had shown the English flag, were making great depredations among American merchantmen, and the irritation in America against England was increasing. The *Alabama* alone had burned fifty-seven vessels at a value of six and a half million dollars. The blockade could not be weakened to catch her or the *Florida*. Under such circumstances the news came that three more vessels

were being built for the South, and that a three-million-pound loan had been floated in London. Adams wrote home that he expected war in six months, for the only thing that could check the course of the wealthy classes was a military success for the North which did not seem to come at all.

There was a debate in the House on 27th March over the question of the fitting out of vessels, and the light manner with which Palmerston waived aside the American grievance gave the impression to the friends of the North that the debate meant war. But on 5th April Russell stopped one of the vessels, the *Alexandria*, and as a result the loan dropped.

There was still some nervousness all through April, but the debate on the American question in the House, of 24th April, showed a much more friendly tone than the earlier one, and when on 30th June Roebuck, in the House, put a practical instruction to the Government "to enter into negotiations with the great Powers of Europe for the purpose of obtaining their co-operation in recognition of the Confederacy," there was such a preponderating opposition to him that on 13th July he withdrew the motion.

This absolute determination not to recognize the Confederacy was made when even the friends of the North believed that its cause was hopeless. General Hooker had been defeated before Chancellorsville and Lee had invaded Pennsylvania. Any day tidings might come that he had captured Washington and Baltimore. Grant was still held at bay at Vicksburg and the result of that siege was doubtful. When the news came that Lee had actually been defeated at Gettysburg, and



Grant had captured Vicksburg, a good part of the English Press and the upper classes mourned as for a calamity. The fall of Washington had been fully expected.

Seward's letter to Adams concerning the two rams that were being built was that if any more ships were fitted out they would "pursue the pirates into British ports," and Adams wrote hastily to Lord Russell concerning the ships, "This is war." On 8th and 9th October 1863 the rams were seized by the English Government, and in the end purchased by them.

But the "new reckoning" was not in the world of foreign or domestic politics, but in the field of battle. The limitless resources of the North and the limited resources of the South were being matched to a logical conclusion. By the summer of 1863 the decisive battles were fought in favour of the North.

In September of the year before, when M'Clellan had fought and won at Antietam, Lincoln had hoped that he would prevent Lee from escaping with his army already crippled by a fourth, and that Richmond would be taken, and thus the war be brought to an end. It seemed to him that under the conditions this was feasible. Perhaps the wish was father to the thought, for he knew that another year of war would mean a radical change in the laws of the Government he was trying to uphold, a forced conscription of soldiers, and perhaps foreign recognition of the South, or mediation.

He urged M'Clellan with gentleness, with arguments, and finally with impatience. "I have just read your dispatch about sore-tongued and fatigued horses," he wrote to him on 23rd October, two weeks

before his dismissal. "Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?"

Finally, on the 7th of November, he sent an order which relieved M'Clellan of his command and placed Burnside in his stead, "because he was a good house-keeper." In reality because there was no one else. Burnside had twice refused the command on the ground of his own unfitness, and most military experts agree with him.

The fatality of the Eastern campaign continued. Burnside threw himself against the Confederate forces at Fredericksburg Heights on 13th December, with the result that 13,000 Union soldiers lay slain on the field. Again and again he sent his men up against a fortified stone wall, only to be mown down. Burnside had proved almost as slow in movements as M'Clellan and not as cautious.

The army reverses angered the nation and the blame fell on Lincoln. A cartoon of 3rd January in *Harper's Weekly* showed Columbia demanding of Lincoln an accounting of the thousands slain at Fredericksburg.

"This," replied Lincoln, "reminds me of a little joke."

"Go," she said. "Tell your little joke at Springfield."

With the nation watching him, Lincoln tried yet another experiment in the army. He relieved General Burnside and placed in his stead General Hooker, "Fighting Joe Hooker," who had criticized his commander to such an extent, and had talked so much of the necessity of a dictatorship, that Lincoln decided to

try him. He sent him a characteristic letter ending with, "What I ask of you is military success and I will risk the dictatorship."

Hooker brought neither success nor the much-talked-of dictatorship. He met Lee in May at Chancellorsville and went down heavily before him. Seventeen thousand were dead on the side of the North, and thirteen thousand on the South. The South lost one of its ablest generals in the death of Stonewall Jackson, who was shot accidentally by one of his own pickets.

Lee, whose resources were less than the North's, naturally continued the offensive and followed up his victory. But he lay for a month on the opposite side of the Rappahannock facing Hooker's camp, held back by his own Government, which hoped that the defeat at Chancellorsville, coupled with the discontent of the Copperheads and the threat of foreign intervention, would force a treaty of peace from Lincoln. No offer of peace came, except on the basis of Union and the laying down of arms, and Lee finally began his desperate and fatal march northward.

Hooker would have preferred to continue against Richmond, but the idea recurred to Lincoln that here again the decisive battle could be fought. "Lee's army and not Richmond is your true objective point," he told him.

On 22nd June the Confederates entered Pennsylvania. The intensity of the situation showed itself in a nervous changing of commanders. General Hallock was put over Hooker, and on the 27th Hooker was entirely relieved, and General Meade, at three in the morning, was given the appointment. The argu-

ments in his favour were that he was a native of Pennsylvania, where the battle was to be fought, and a Democrat, which would check that party's demand for the restoration of M'Clellan.

On the first day of July the Northern armies under Meade surrounded Lee, now in exactly the same position as the Northern generals were in the South, in hostile territory, with no means of getting information.

The battle lasted three days, Lincoln spending his days and nights in the telegraph-office of the War Department. The North won, but with dreadful losses, and Lee escaped. Before this battle Lincoln had a dream which he had dreamed before on the eve of the battle of Antietam.

He saw a ship sailing away, badly damaged, with victorious Union vessels in pursuit. There appeared also the end of a battle on land, the enemy routed, and the Union forces in possession of an important point.

The dream seemed of great portent to him, coming as it did before the battle of Gettysburg, now called the pivotal battle of the war. When it was fought, however, it seemed only another one of those indecisive Union victories at the cost of fearful carnage. Twenty-three thousand lay slain on either side and Lee's army was free.

Whether Meade could have pursued Lee and really crushed his forces is a matter of military speculation, but Lincoln's distress over Meade's failure to do so was keen. He wrote Meade as near a letter of censure as he came to writing anyone, but he thought better of sending a letter of criticism to a general who had won

what was after all an important battle, and he did not send it. But he could not help writing and speaking of it to other men. It was one of his greatest disappointments of the war.

The day after Gettysburg better news reached Lincoln. Vicksburg had fallen, and a few days later, 9th July, Port Hudson was taken, and Lincoln could write, "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea."

The Union forces in the West were pressing toward the heart of the Confederacy. After the evacuation of Corinth, in May 1862, the Confederate General, Bragg, had moved northward to Chatanooga with 35,000 soldiers. He made an advance upon Louisville, Kentucky, but was checked by General Buell at Perryville in a decisive battle on 8th October. The Confederates returned to Chatanooga.

In the meantime an attempt was made to recapture Corinth, under the Confederate General, Van Dorn, which almost succeeded, but on the second day of desperate fighting (4th October) was driven back by General Rosecrans.

Step by step the battlefields and the armies were being pushed towards the strongholds of Tennessee and Georgia.

General Rosecrans succeeded General Buell in Tennessee, and after three days' terrible fighting around Murfreesboro, 31st December to 2nd January, held his ground against the attacks of the Confederates and the latter were forced to leave even Chatanooga to the Northern troops.

Nine months later, on 19th and 20th September

1863, General Bragg made a stand against Rosecrans and inflicted upon him a defeat which came very nearly being the most overwhelming Federal disaster of the war. Much blood was yet to be shed before the winter's fighting was over. On 24th and 25th November, Grant, who had taken charge of the forces at Chatanooga, fought Bragg, who was besieging them at Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain, with such force and success as to break up the siege and make him retreat. General Bragg fell back to Dalton, and the Confederate General, Longstreet, with the force that General Bragg had sent into Eastern Tennessee, crossed the mountains and joined Lee in Virginia.

To the world, at this moment, Lincoln, in his official capacity as President of the United States, presented his Gettysburg address, which has become one of the basic documents of American history. Every school child is taught to say it by heart; it is recited at every national anniversary.

The field of Gettysburg was dedicated as a national cemetery for the soldiers who died in the war. Edward Everett gave the speech of the occasion and the President dedicated the ground. They say that at the time the speech made small impression. It was too cryptic, too chiselled to be impressive, read to a vast throng in an open field drenched with the blood of 50,000 men. "That speech won't scour," said Lincoln to his friend Lamon. "It is a flat failure. The people are disappointed."

They have long since awakened to its beauty:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought

forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

To himself he expressed a thought which came to him in the second year of the war, when he saw that the struggle was not to be the holiday jaunt that had been generally expected. His economic and social philosophy was insufficient to answer the question of the meaning of the great struggle, its length, and the great task it was to accomplish. He sought an answer

through the divine will. In September 1862 he made this note:—

“The Will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God’s purpose is something different from the purpose of either party, and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the now contestants He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began, and having begun, He could give final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.”



## CHAPTER XII

### RE-ELECTION

THE battle of Gettysburg did not put an end to the war. Yet it was decisive enough to assure ultimate success to the arms of the North. Discouraging as was the disastrous defeat at Chickamauga of 20th September 1863, it did not deter the country from voting approval in the elections of November. Vallandigham was defeated in Ohio, a War Governor was elected in Pennsylvania, and in general there were Republican gains over the elections of the year before. Lincoln wrote a little ironically of the fortuitousness of this success:

“ I am glad the elections this summer have gone favourably, and that I have not, by native depravity or under evil influence, done anything bad enough to prevent the good result. I hope to ‘ stand firm ’ enough to not go backward, and yet not go forward fast enough to wreck the country’s cause.”

Though the country approved of the purpose of the war, a clamour arose for its end. Suspicion was beginning to be felt that Lincoln and the Administration could end it quickly if they so desired, and not Congress, but the war and the political skirmishes for the Presidential campaign of 1864 held the attention of public interest.

Lincoln earnestly desired a re-nomination to finish

the task that he had begun. The republican form of government puts its administration on trial at every election, and voting had to take place when the national authority was trying to assert itself through the means of a civil war. Yet, to quote Lincoln, "we cannot have free government without elections, and if the rebellion could force us to forego or postpone the national election it might fairly claim to have already conquered and ruined us."

The elections were to be held, but in this precarious condition it must be confessed that the whole machinery of the Government was employed to further its success.

In the early fall preparations were being made for the nominations to be held in the spring and summer. The slow, deliberate and lenient policies which Lincoln laid down made him an unpopular candidate with his own party, the Republican. It was dissatisfied with his continued support of the more conservative faction in Missouri, which were represented by his personal friends, the Blairs, and which disputed incessantly with the radicals, who showed their temper by the support of Frémont and his proclamation of freedom.

On the other hand there was growing up in the Republican ranks, as in the other parties, a strong peace faction, which placed the length of the war on Lincoln's shoulders, and which, like Greeley, held to the anomalous position that it would not sacrifice slavery yet would make peace. Lincoln was becoming unpopular for still another cause—the conservative principles upon which he was instituting amnesty and a reconstruction of the States brought back under Federal control, and which seemed to the radicals a surrender of the principles of

freedom gained through the war. In general it was felt that however well or ill Lincoln's task had been performed, a newer man, uncommitted to definite policies, was needed to carry on the task now grown into larger fields and surrounded with larger problems.

Lincoln realized that his one hope of re-nomination was to drop party lines, and to place himself at the head of the one principle for which he was fighting—unconditional union. For this purpose the Republican party changed its name to the National Union League, and thus it included under its banner a great many so-called war Democrats as well as Republicans.

In August of 1863 Lincoln practically offered himself for re-nomination in a letter written to the Union men at Springfield. He still felt it incumbent upon him, despite the cries of the radicals that his heart was not in the freeing of the negro, to disclaim the charge that the war was carried on in the negro's behalf. It showed whose cries were the louder; it also showed, perhaps, to whom his ear was best attuned.

#### LETTER to J. C. CONKLING.

“WASHINGTON, 26th August 1863.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter inviting me to attend a mass meeting of unconditional Union men, to be held at the capitol of Illinois on the 3rd day of September, has been received. It would be very agreeable to me to thus meet my old friends at my own home, but I cannot just now be absent from here so long as a visit there would require.

“The meeting is to be of all those who maintain unconditional devotion to the Union; and I am sure my old political friends will thank me for tendering, as I do, the nation's gratitude to those and other noble men whom no

partisan malice or partisan hope can make false to the nation's life.

"There are those who are dissatisfied with me. To such I would say: You desire peace, and you blame me that we do not have it. But how can we attain it? There are but three conceivable ways: First, to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. This I am trying to do. Are you for it? If you are, so far we are agreed. If you are not for it, a second way is to give up the Union. I am against this. Are you for it? If you are, you should say so plainly. If you are not for force, nor yet for dissolution, there only remains some imaginable compromise. I do not believe any compromise embracing the maintenance of the Union is now possible. All I learn leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the rebellion is its military, its army. That army dominates all the country and all the people within its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present, because such man or men have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them.

"To illustrate: Suppose refugees from the South and peace men of the North get together in convention, and frame and proclaim a compromise embracing a restoration of the Union. In what way can that compromise be used to keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania? Meade's army can keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania, and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence. But no paper compromise to which the controllers of Lee's army are not agreed can at all affect that army. In an effort at such compromise we should waste time which the enemy would improve to our disadvantage, and that would be all. A compromise, to be effective, must be made either with those who control the rebel army, or with the people first liberated from the domination of that army by the success of our own army. Now, allow me to assure you that no word

or intimation from that rebel army, or from any of the men controlling it, in relation to any peace compromise, has ever come to my knowledge or belief. All charges and insinuations to the contrary are deceptive and groundless. And I promise you that if any such proposition shall hereafter come it shall not be rejected and kept a secret from you. I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service—the United States Constitution—and that, as such, I am responsible to them.

“But to be plain. You are dissatisfied with me about the negro. Quite likely there is a difference of opinion between you and myself on that subject. I certainly wish that all men could be free, while I suppose you do not. Yet, I have neither adopted nor proposed any measure which is not consistent with even your view, provided you are for the Union. I suggested compensated emancipation, to which you replied you wished not to be taxed to buy negroes. But I had not asked you to be taxed to buy negroes, except in such way as to save you from greater taxation to save the Union exclusively by other means.

“You dislike the emancipation proclamation, and perhaps would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional. I think differently. I think the Constitution invests its commander-in-chief with the law of war in time of war. The most that can be said—if so much—is that slaves are property. Is there—has there ever been—any question that, by the law of war, property, both of enemies and friends, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever taking it helps us or hurts the enemy? Armies, the world over, destroy enemies’ property when they cannot use it; and even destroy their own to keep it from the enemy. Civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves or hurt the enemy, except a few things regarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes and non-combatants, male and female.

“ But the proclamation, as law, either is valid or is not valid. If it is not valid it needs no retraction. If it is valid, it cannot be retracted any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favourably for the Union. Why better after the retraction than before the issue? There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the rebellion before the proclamation issued; the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming, unless averted by those in revolt returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favourably for us since the issue of the proclamation as before. I know, as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field, who have given us our most important successes, believe the emancipation policy and the use of the coloured troops constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion, and that at least one of these important successes could not have been achieved when it was but for the aid of black soldiers. Among the commanders holding these views are some who have never had any affinity with what is called Abolitionism, or with Republican party politics, but who hold them purely as military opinions. I submit these opinions as being entitled to some weight against the objections often urged that emancipation and arming the blacks are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted as such in good faith.

“ You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively, to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time then for you to declare you will not fight to free negroes.

‘ I thought that in your struggle for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to

that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes can be got to do as soldiers leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise, being made, must be kept.

"The signs look better. The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea. Thanks to the great North-west for it. Nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up they met New England Empire, Keystone and Jersey, hewing their way right and left. The sunny South, too, in more colours than one, also lent a hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down in black and white. The job was a great national one, and let none be blamed who bore an honourable part in it. And while those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg, and on many fields of lesser note. Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks. Thanks to all: for the great Republic—for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future—thanks to all.

"Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember

that with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation, while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they strove to hinder it.

“Still, let us not be over-sanguine of a speedy final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in His own good time, will give us the rightful result.”

This letter by no means rallied all forces to his side. There was a definite movement to nominate Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury. It went so far as to produce a circular, which declared that the reelection of Lincoln was “practically impossible,” that the cause of human liberty and the dignity of the nation suffered from his “tendency towards compromises and temporary expedients”; and that in the Hon. Salmon P. Chase were to be found “more of the qualities needed in a President during the next four years,” than were “combined in any other available candidate.”

When this circular became public Chase sent in his resignation, but Lincoln refused to accept it. “Whether you shall remain at the head of the Treasury Department,” he wrote to him, “is a question which I will not allow myself to consider from any standpoint other than my judgment of the public service, and, in that view, I do not perceive occasion for a change.”

As it turned out, the State Convention in Ohio, Chase’s home state, refused to give him the nomination, deciding for Lincoln instead. However, the opposition factions kept up their search for a more available



candidate than Lincoln, and towards the spring two definite movements took place—a radical opposition which went towards Frémont, and a more conservative one which sought Grant.

The movement towards Grant worried Lincoln very much, for he was needed in the field. He was the first aggressive general whom the war had produced and he could not be spared. "He fights," were the repeated answers of Lincoln to the requests that Grant be removed by officers jealous of his successes. "He keeps still and saws wood." This quality was needed now at the crucial stage of the war, when to lose him would have meant a virtual surrender. But Grant had a wholesome fear, as he said himself, "of the politicians in Washington," and refused to give his consent to political scheming. He had other work to do for the cause, and his victory at Chatanooga, in December 1863, reflected glory to Lincoln's war policy, and helped Lincoln on to popular favour.

In March 1864 Congress decided to renew the title of Lieutenant-General of All the Armies which had been given to Washington, and it was presented to Grant, in the hope that he could now, with all the armies under him, break the forces of the Confederates and end the war by the summer.

In May Grant commenced his "Wilderness" Campaign, which was an advance from the Potomac upon Lee, who lay between him and Richmond. This had to be done through a wood with thick undergrowth which stretched south of Fredericksburg and the Rappahannock to the York River. Grant's army was greatly superior in numbers to Lee's, but the latter operated

on shorter lines and behind entrenchments, and succeeded in holding Grant for sixteen days of continued fighting before making a stand at Cold Harbor on 2nd June 1864. Grant stormed his position along his whole line, but in an hour was repulsed with a loss of 17,000. He then decided to enter Richmond by its back-door, Petersburg, but failing, with great losses, in its capture, sat down to a nine months' siege.

The country had no idea that Grant's campaign would be so long or so costly. With the disaster at Cold Harbor it saw 55,000 veteran troops dead, and Richmond still untaken, and Grant settling down to a long siege. But in May, when the manœuvres were begun, hopes ran high, and the National Union League Convention, which met in Baltimore on 17th June, felt the country behind it eager for the continuation of the war. Lincoln was nominated by the whole Convention, with the exception of the delegation from Missouri, who were ever against him, and who gave their vote to Grant. For the purpose of including all shades of national Unionists, the Convention nominated a war Democrat of the South, Andrew Johnson, as Vice-President, and counteracted this conservative ticket by a radical platform which recommended a change in the Cabinet and the passing of a 13th Amendment to the Constitution for the abolition of slavery.

On 31st May the radical Republicans, uncompromising to the last, met in Convention, about 350 strong, and nominated Frémont for President. Their platform demanded one term for President (the same argument of a one-term Presidency was used by the supporters of Chase), the confiscation of the land of

the rebels, the reconstruction of the rebellious states by Congress, not by the President, vigorous war measures, and the destruction of slavery for ever. Wendell Phillips was one of the ardent supporters of Frémont. The re-election of Lincoln, he said, would mean the end of Union, or a reconstruction on terms worse than Union.

When Lincoln heard of the nomination he said nothing, but read from Samuel: "And everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them, and there were in all about four hundred men."

The wave of popularity which brought Grant to the post of Lieutenant-General of All the Armies caused him again to be spoken of as Republican candidate. The very Saturday before the Union League Convention met a large Grant meeting was held in New York under the auspices of the leading Republican politicians. Their hope lay in his having such speedy success that he would be of necessity the man before the people, and Lincoln be disqualified. Lincoln watched these proceedings, and only remarked: "If he takes Richmond, let him have the nomination."

He used his political knowledge to help him gain the nomination, but he did not sacrifice the cause for the sake of popularity. He waited until the October states had voted in 1863 before calling for 300,000 volunteers; but in the midst of the political depression of the following summer, after the defeat at Cold Harbor and Petersburg, he called for 500,000 troops for one, two and three years. His political advisers warned

him against such a call, but the men were needed, and the call was given almost at the cost of his re-election. Lincoln was called a tyrant, a Nero, who could have peace but kept on draining the country of its best blood because of his war lust. Discontent went so far that an organized movement was set on foot to recall his nomination and place someone else in his stead.

The darkest days were in July and August. The repeated rumours that peace could be had if Lincoln so wished could not be stilled. Greeley kept up a continual fire on the subject.

"I know," said Greeley, "that nine-tenths of the whole people, North and South, are anxious for peace—peace on almost any terms—and utterly sick of human slaughter and devastation." He had received information, he wrote to Lincoln, that there were two ambassadors of "Davis & Co." with full and complete powers for peace. "Our bleeding, bankrupt, almost dying country longs for peace and shivers at the prospect of fresh conscriptions, of further wholesale devastations and new rivers of human blood." He urged Lincoln to make an offer to the commissioners. Lincoln decided to send Greeley "to crack that nut himself," and he shrewdly appointed him as commissioner to meet these men with an ultimatum, written 18th July 1864:—

"To Whom It May Concern: Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the Executive Government of the United

States, and will be met by liberal terms on other substantial and collateral points, and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe conduct both ways."

The negotiations came to nothing, and the To Whom It May Concern letter made a very unfavourable impression in some quarters, because of the ultimatum that both the Union and the abandonment of slavery should be recognized. It gave semblance to the statement that peace could be had if Lincoln so willed it. Greeley especially felt that he had been duped.

In August, after the added disaster of Petersburg and the dissatisfaction that arose from his call for more troops, Lincoln wrote a letter which was never sent, in which he said: "If Jefferson Davis wishes for himself, or for the benefit of his friends in the North, to know what I would do if he were to offer peace and reunion, say nothing about slavery, let him try me." As he did not send this, one cannot say that he was ready to abandon the slavery question for peace.

The Union Party had lost all hope of election. "Mr Lincoln is already beaten," wrote Greeley on 18th August. "He cannot be re-elected, and we must have another ticket to save us from utter overthrow." The *Cincinnati Gazette* said openly that "the people regard Mr Lincoln's candidacy as a misfortune, his apparent strength when nominated was fictitious." Lincoln was again worried lest they might take Grant away from the field and set him up as a candidate. He sent a friend to sound him. Grant brought his hand down emphatically on the back of his arm-chair and said: "They cannot do it, they cannot compel me to

do it." Lincoln was relieved at that. Nevertheless, as late as August, he wrote a resolution on a slip of paper which he gave to his Cabinet to sign. He asked them to put their names on the back of it, without telling them what was written within.

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterward."

An idea of the state of affairs can be seen from a letter of Leonard Swett's to his wife, written towards the end of August. Swett was one of Lincoln's political managers.

"MY DEAR WIFE,—The fearful things in relation to the country have induced me to stay a week here. I go to Washington to-night, and can't see how I can get away from there before the last of the week.

"A summary of movements is as follows:

"The malicious foes of Lincoln are calling or getting up a Buffalo Convention to supplant him. They are—Sumner, Wade, Henry Winter Davis, Chase, Frémont, Wilson, etc.

"The Democrats are conspiring to resist the draft. We seized this morning three thousand pistols going to Indiana for distribution. The war Democrats are trying to make the Chicago nominee a loyal man. The peace Democrats are trying to get control of the Government, and, through alliance with Jefferson Davis, to get control of both armies and make universal revolution necessary.

"The most fearful things are probable.

"I am acting with Thurlow Weed, Raymond, etc., to try to avert. There is not much hope.

"Unless material changes can be wrought, Lincoln's election is beyond any possible hope. It is probably clean gone now."

The military situation was discouraging for all concerned. While Grant was besieging Petersburg, General Hunter had been driven from the valley of the Virginia by the Confederates earlier in the year, and the Confederate General Early, with part of Lee's troops, defeated General Lew Wallace and General Crook and came so close to Washington that with a little more promptness the capital would have been his. He was driven back by Sheridan after a spectacular ride, to rally his troops. His telegram—"We have just sent them whirling through Winchester and are after them to-morrow"—became a rallying cry for the North in August.

In the West the operations were to be ultimately more successful than in the East, but in the months of July and August the end could not be foreseen. Sherman was driving General Johnston, who was General Braggs' successor, back upon Atlanta. General Johnston was not strong enough to face Sherman, but his retreat was brilliant. In July he was in Atlanta, ready to make his stand, when President Davis relieved him and placed General Hood in his stead. On 2nd September Sherman repulsed General Hood's attacks, and moving around Atlanta, cut his lines of supply and took the city. General Hood went north, towards Tennessee, hoping that Sherman would follow, but instead he began his famous march to the sea, foraging off the land and

destroying property as he went along, until he reached Savannah in December. He then turned north-west, in 1865, and crossed South Carolina. Not a seaport of importance remained in the hands of the Confederates, Mobile having been taken on 5th August by Admiral Farragut, in co-operation with land forces.

Sherman's march would have had no military significance had not General Thomas attacked and utterly destroyed the Confederate General Hood's army at Nashville, Tennessee, on 15th December. Sherman, moving at his will, had only to keep General Johnston employed, and Johnston retreated before him into North Carolina, leaving Grant free to work his will on Richmond and Petersburg.

This whole military campaign could not be foreseen in August of 1864, and when the Democrats met in Convention in Chicago the war was so unpopular that Vallandigham and his friends succeeded in putting forth an absolute peace platform. "A cessation of hostilities with a view to the convention of states" was demanded, and it described the sacrifice of lives and treasures as "four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war."

Not to lose the war Democrats entirely, General M'Clellan, a man who had fought and believed in the war, was nominated for President. He made his position and that of his party still more anomalous by repudiating the peace platform entirely.

Coupled with this contradictory and impossible position in which the Democrats were placed came the news of the capture of Mobile and Atlanta. The war was succeeding. "Sherman and Farragut," said



Seward, " have knocked the bottom out of the Chicago nominations."

The question of the " reconstruction " of the rebellious states brought back under Federal control was also a factor in the struggle over the elections. Already there was a disagreement between Congress and Lincoln over the subject. Lincoln's attitude was consistent from the first, but he showed a tendency to leniency which was not at all in keeping with the temper of Congress, which wanted to see more durable fruit as a result of the four years' war. Congress did not trouble itself about consistency. It recognized states when it was to its advantage to do so, and did not when it might prove otherwise. Thus it recognized the government of the Western Counties of Virginia which remained loyal as the government of the whole state. It took this body's consent for the formation of the Western Counties into the state of West Virginia, but in 1863 it repudiated its power when it removed to Alexandria and set up its rule over such counties as were newly brought under the control of the Federal lines.

Lincoln, on the other hand, showed plainly where his tendency lay. In December of 1863, acting on his power to grant pardons and reprieves, and by an authorization of an Act of Congress of July 1862, he issued a proclamation of amnesty. This promised full restoration of rights in property, except in slaves, of all persons who laid down their arms and took the oath of loyalty to the Union. Only persons who had taken a prominent part in secession, or who had left the United States service for the Confederate, were exempted. Also,

whenever in any state one-tenth of the voters of 1860 should take the oath and organize a State government, republican in form under the meaning of the Constitution, he would recognize it, that is, consider it "reconstructed and entitled to representation in Congress." Of course it lay in the power of Congress to seat such representatives or not.

Arkansas was reorganized under the Federal authority in 1863 on substantially the same lines as the Proclamation offered, and in 1864 Lincoln recognized the new Governments of Louisiana and Tennessee. When the electoral votes were sent in from Louisiana and Tennessee Congress refused to admit them, though representatives from Louisiana had been admitted in the House during the last month of the preceding Congress.

Lincoln vetoed the plan of reconstruction which Congress passed, which demanded that not one-tenth of the voters of 1860 should constitute electoral voters, but a majority of the male population, and that they should prohibit slavery forever in their constituencies. Lincoln vetoed this Bill, and he was accused of not wishing to settle this question in the summer of 1864 so as to guard against defeat at the polls by putting himself in a position to have the votes of these Southern States counted if they became necessary. The opposition faction in Congress published an attack on him in the *Tribune* of 5th August, in which they accused him openly of such designs.

Lincoln had delegates elected from Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas and West Virginia, and the battle for their admission to the Union League Convention

in Baltimore was led by Lincoln's followers. The test struggle came over the admission of the delegates from Tennessee. They were finally admitted, and Louisiana and Arkansas were then also seated as a matter of course. Lincoln received the nomination without the aid of their votes, but they were there in readiness to retrieve any lost position.

Lincoln's speech of acceptance to the Committee announcing his nomination is noteworthy, because of a telling phrase which was taken up by the people and repeated from one end of the country to the other. "I do not allow myself to suppose that either the Convention or the League have concluded to decide that I am either the greatest or best man in America, but rather they have concluded that it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap."

Though that it were best not to swap horses while crossing a stream became a by-word, nevertheless a strict vigilance was maintained lest the people change their mind and become reckless. The country was well organized in Lincoln's behalf, and well-known politicians were recalled from the field to take the platform for him. Newspapers were won over to plead his cause. James Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald*, who had favoured the nomination of M'Clellan by the Democrats, received a letter in Lincoln's own hand, offering him the post of Minister to Paris. Bennett declined, but soon came forth with the suggestion in his paper that an entirely new nomination was needed. "Lincoln has proved a failure," he said.

“Frémont has proved a failure. Let us have a new candidate.” As was expected, the new candidate could not be found, and the *Herald* announced itself openly in favour of Lincoln.

By September, Frémont and the radical Republicans saw that their cause was hopeless, and they withdrew from the canvass. When the time for elections approached the whole War Department was made use of to ensure success. Officers and privates were given furloughs to go home for the voting, and where the State laws permitted it, soldiers voted in the fields. In New York the State Legislature passed a law permitting the soldiers to vote in the ranks, and to send their ballots to their friends in New York for polling. For this it was necessary to know just where all the New York companies were located. This Secretary Stanton at first refused to allow, but a word from Lincoln settled that difficulty quickly.

With such elaborate preparations the election came off on 8th November. Lincoln carried states enough to give him 212 electoral votes out of 233, and a popular majority of 500,000. New Jersey, Delaware and Kentucky voted for M'Clellan.

With Frémont out of the race, and only M'Clellan, a pro-slavery Democrat, as an opponent, the re-election of Lincoln was a great relief to the more radical elements. His election meant a proposal in Congress for the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. Enough Republican and Unionist members were elected to the House of Representatives to ensure the requisite majority for this. “I give you joy of the election,” wrote Emerson to a friend. “Seldom in

history was so much staked on a popular vote, I suppose never in history."

Lincoln himself received the news quietly, sitting in Stanton's office, studying the telegraphic returns. When there was a lull in the reports he read aloud the writings of a contemporary humorist, "Petroleum V. Nasby." The country had approved his task, and with his re-election it was soon to be finished.

Satisfied, he read quietly on.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE END

THE problems before him were changing. The war was soon to end with victory assured for the North, and more and more he had to consider how to change the sword back again into the ploughshare. The fate of the war he left entirely in the hands of General Grant, not because the latter had been made almost his equal in command, but because he at last had found the general who was equal to the situation. He aided and supported Grant in every request, even at the most critical point in his own political career, as in the call for troops in July, and seldom did he suggest anything. Only once in September, when General Early came so near Washington that the capital was in danger, did he send the following tentative telegram:—

“WASHINGTON, 29th Sept. 1864.

“I hope it will have no constraint on you, nor do harm in any way, for me to say I am a little afraid lest Lee sends reinforcements to Early, and thus enables him to turn upon Sheridan.”

In general his telegrams to him were of encouragement and approval. When it became evident that the Wilderness Campaign meant “going through on this line” much longer than the summer, he sent Grant the following characteristic telegram:—

“WASHINGTON, 17<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1864.

“I have seen your dispatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip, and chew and choke as much as possible.”

With Grant in control of the military situation Lincoln had two problems which still remained to him. One was to gain peace on his own terms, and the other to carry through his policy concerning the reconstruction of the seceded states.

The latter was, of course, the most difficult and important of the two, but nevertheless the peace factions were so strong, and the rumours so thick, that peace could be had but for Lincoln's refusal, that he was persuaded more than once to follow up the various clues that were offered him in the cause of peace.

It is true he was never very sanguine of results, and at heart he trusted much more to keeping the powder dry than to forming peace conferences, but his political sense prevented him from ignoring them entirely.

In January he made the most earnest effort for peace yet attempted. He was persuaded by Blair, a mutual friend of both the Confederate President, Davis, and himself, that the former was willing to come to terms. Lincoln sent Seward, the Secretary of State, to a Conference in Hampton Roads, where the Confederate Vice-President, Stephens, and two other representative men of the Confederacy were to meet.

Even in this Conference there was a premonition of failure in the preliminary skirmishes over the wording of the commissions. Davis had written that

the purpose of the meeting was to secure peace "for the two countries," while Lincoln wrote it was to secure peace to the people "of our common country."

When it finally did take place, Lincoln himself came to Hampton Roads, hoping that by his being present in person he could accomplish something definite, but the statement that the reconstruction of the Union was a "*sine qua non* with him" again definitely ended the discussion. However, he took occasion to show how lenient was his personal attitude towards the South. As for the Confiscation Acts, he said, since their enforcement was left entirely to him he could be relied upon to be liberal. He went so far as to say that he was willing that the North be taxed to remunerate the South for their liberated slaves, since after all the North was as responsible for slavery as the South. In fact, he continued, he knew some who were in favour of an appropriation as high as four hundred million dollars for this purpose. But he maintained the point that he could not give any definite conditions to the South while they were in arms. Someone suggested that there were cases in history where this was done—Charles I. for instance. Lincoln answered that he did not remember much about the history of Charles I. except that he had lost his head. The Conference ended, as might have been foreseen, without results.

Davis presented Lincoln's ultimatum with harshness, and left out entirely the suggestion of indemnity. In an impassioned but rather odd speech to the people at Richmond he said: "I spoke always of two countries, Mr Lincoln spoke always of a common country. I can have no common country with the



Yankees. My life is bound up always with the Confederacy. . . . With the Confederacy I will live or die. Thank God I represent a people too proud to eat the leek or bow the neck to mortal man."

Lincoln's statement that he knew some who were in favour of an appropriation as high as four hundred million dollars for the purpose of an indemnity was far too optimistic. As far as could be seen, he stood alone in that suggestion. Two days later he called his Cabinet and submitted a draft of a message which he was going to send to Congress. It was to empower the President to pay four hundred million dollars to all the slave-holding states, in or out of the Union, as compensation for their slaves. This was to be distributed among the states *pro rata* according to their respective slave population, as shown by the census of 1860, on condition that all resistance to the national authority was to cease by the 1st of April. The Cabinet disapproved unanimously and urged him not to send the message. He sighed and folded up the paper. "I see you are all against me," he said. And he did not present the resolution, which would have been most unpopular with the very Republican Congress then sitting, there being friction enough over the question of the organization of Louisiana and Tennessee.

However, Lincoln had learned that if he could not drive Congress, he at least could make it meet him half way, if not a good piece further. He had tact, and the lack of harmony over the question of reconstruction in no way became personal as it did under Johnson's Administration. He took especial pains to show his friendship to the leader of the opposition,

Sumner, the Republican Senator from Massachusetts, making him the guest of honour at the Inaugural Ball, where he came in on the arm of Mrs Lincoln. In all the weeks of the debates Sumner had free entrance into the White House. Had Lincoln lived he might have been able to carry out his plans for reconstruction. His frankness on the negro question would have prevented the Northern capitalists from the wholesale exploitation of the South which they undertook immediately upon his death; but the negro would have lost even the paper rights that were bestowed upon him. There is some evidence that his assassination was directed more from the headquarters of finance in New York, Wall Street, than from the South. However it may be, no one anticipated that this winter would be the last of his life, least of all Lincoln himself, and he was holding a loose rein on the question of reconstruction and a tight one on this matter of war.

"Let nothing," he telegraphed to Grant, when the Hampton Road negotiations were going on, "which is transpiring change, hinder or delay your military movements or plans."

The end was truly near. The South was absolutely exhausted, her money gone, and after the disasters of 1863 the blockade so successful that no supplies whatever could be got for the army. King Cotton, under whose ægis the war had been begun, lay prostrate on the wharves of Southern ports. All hope of foreign recognition was gone, and the body of public opinion, which had been unconvinced of the need of secession

in 1860, now began to assert itself strongly for peace. The soldiers were deserting in large numbers, and twice the Confederate Congress had suggested that they lay down their arms. President Davis was obdurate, and the war was pressed on, but the discontent had reached even the Cabinet, where Alexander Stephens, the Vice-President of the Confederacy, resigned in despair.

The South was without railways, and the theatre of the war was necessarily along her waterways. Her strongholds lay along the Tennessee, the Cumberland, the Ohio and the Mississippi, and to protect them she had to keep many more men locked behind fortress walls than she could afford to take away from active service. Thirty thousand prisoners went with the fall of Vicksburg, the largest number ever taken in history. With Fort Hudson seven thousand were taken. With the fall of Vicksburg, the Mississippi, which was the one inland carrier, fell into the hands of the North, and the South was cut off from its grain and food supply, Texas. The North now commenced an offensive war, swarming across the Southern lands with the deliberate and business-like purpose of destruction. It is significant that it was upon the newly-founded mills and railways that especial wrath was visited. Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas was directed especially against the railways, and his report to the War Department makes a perfect manual on "Railway Wrecking."

The control of the Mississippi offered the control of Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, and the fall of Chatanooga opened Georgia and the Carolinas. The war was carried home to the Southerner.

Lee, besieged in Richmond by Grant, had to resort to an open circular asking the surrounding country for provisions for his army. The lack of funds and of men meant the physical impossibility of carrying on the war, which became patent to both the North and South. President Davis had forced the war on past the elections with the hope that Lincoln might be defeated and a peace more advantageous to the South offered. He little guessed that though Lincoln showed such firmness on the question of Union, his terms of peace were much more favourable than the rising capitalistic class in the North desired or permitted.

By February Congress passed the 13th Amendment, which had failed in the previous session. This provided for the absolute abolition of slavery. Lincoln was as eager that it be passed as any of the so-called more "radical" Republicans, for once having proceeded towards emancipation it was evidently impracticable and impossible to recede. Even in the South, the stress of events had made the Confederate Congress consider emancipation of the slaves as well as arming them. Over and over again Lincoln said he could not "return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress."

"If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it."

But the drastic flames of the war had left very few who believed that Union and slavery were to be the motive forces of the new national life. All agreed upon emancipation, but the division lay in the question

as to who was to profit by it. Lincoln, who was very much opposed to large combinations of wealth, was eager to put through his programme, which would enable the Southern States to begin their political and therefore economic life as quickly as possible. The war had been fought on the constitutional power of "suppressing domestic insurrection." During the conflict it was never admitted by the Federal power that the states were out of the Union; now, when victory was at hand, a cry went up to make them dependent territories. This was actually accomplished in 1867, two years after the war was closed.

The supposed reason for this attitude was that the Southern States could not be trusted in their legislation concerning the negro. It was true that as fast as they could get control of their State legislatures they were enacting vagrancy laws, copied in most cases from the vagrancy laws of the North, which put the negro back into virtual bondage. Lincoln had not much hope of counteracting this, except by a limited suffrage for the more educated negro, colonization, and a general speedy recuperation of the economic condition of the South which would reflect indirectly on the welfare of the negro.

The Northern capitalist, however, had no desire to let his victory go, and under the philanthropic guise of supporting the negro entered the South, and captured the State governments for his own purpose.

The abolitionists and radicals went hand in hand with the business men of the Republicans, for with them lay the only hope, meagre as it was, for the newly-freed slaves. The West already rejected any suggestion

to colonize them on its lands. When it was suggested in Congress that land be given them in the South, the argument arose that there were as many landless whites as blacks, and since the nation was too poor to give land to all who were without it, the proposals for economic betterment were dropped for ever.

The North already outnumbered the South in both Houses of Congress. No matter how great Lincoln's personal influence might have been on the question of reconstruction, he could not have prevented a sectional conquest, or a high tariff in the interests of Northern manufacture, or an extensive pension system for Federal soldiers, which the South had to help pay, or the exclusion of the defeated party from Federal office-holding. Only the negro would have been deprived of the ten years of political freedom which he was given by the victorious Republicans to aid them in their control of the State Governments of the South. During these ten years the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution were passed, the first in 1868, which bestowed citizen rights upon the negro, and the second two years later, which endowed him with the suffrage. This amendment was supported by so-called Force Bills, which empowered the use of the army when the right of suffrage was interfered with.

By 1876 capital was well enough established in the country at large for the Republicans to abandon their support of the negro. His rights are now being steadily taken away from him by the Southern States, but nationally they still exist, and in the North the negro's vote is a factor in political computations.

Lincoln, who had seen the reasons and the first

passions of the war, was too close to its causes to feel the onrush of new ideas which its culmination brought. He did not wish to admit them, in the fear of injuring the principles upon which the war was begun. But already these principles were being crushed beyond recognition.

In his second Inaugural Address he dwelt upon the great fact of the war, attempting to explain and puzzle out the past, hardly hinting at the future.

“Fellow-countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

“On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the Inaugural Address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

“One-eighth of the whole population were coloured slaves,

not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

“Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

“The Almighty has His own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.’ If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—ferently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be



paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

The last paragraph is taught to the American school child as one of the tenets of government. "With malice toward none, with charity toward all," and so forth. In the meantime, the North was already eager for the new problem—reconstruction, without regard for malice or charity, but for power.

While methods of reconstruction were being discussed and evolved the ragged edges of the war had to be tied up. Grant's long siege around Richmond was finally to come to a close by Lee's evacuation. On 2nd April he left Richmond in the hope of uniting with Johnston, who was now in command of the remnants of Hood's army, which had had such a crushing defeat at Nashville in December. With one united army in the field Lee still had hopes of prolonging the war, but Grant hastened after him, and the concentration of the Confederate forces was not to be.

Lincoln had come down to City Points, Grant's headquarters, the week before. Could not victory be had, he asked, without another battle? Grant's answer was very disappointing, for he felt sure another battle was to take place. But in the end Lincoln's

hopes were fulfilled. The great slaughterings were over.

When Lee evacuated Richmond, Davis and the Cabinet fled also. Lincoln walked into the city, and even went through the buildings which had held the seat of the former Government. The city was in a turmoil, with buildings on fire, drunken soldiers everywhere, and negroes in a religious frenzy over the evacuation of the Confederates and the sudden appearance of the President. He spent the night in Richmond and returned to Washington without having been molested in any way, though he was recognized by all. The negroes greeted him with ecstatic joy. "Glory Hallelujah, God bless Massa Lincoln! He's de Messiah, shuah!" they cried, as they crowded around him. "See yeah, honey, look at de saviour, and you'll git well," one negress called out, holding her child up to look at the President.

On 6th April Sheridan reported: "If the thing is pressed, I think that Lee will surrender." Grant sent the dispatch to Lincoln, who replied: "Let the thing be pressed." At the same time he sent Grant instructions not in any way to give terms of peace, as that should be left to the Administration.

Grant came to Sheridan's camp in the middle of the night, "to press the thing." The sentinels recognized him. "Boys, this means business," they cried.

On the same day Lee had made a stand, but was defeated, and for three days he made desperate efforts to join Johnston, but was hemmed in on all sides. There was no alternative for the Army of Virginia but to surrender.

The two generals met in the little village of Appomattox, seventy-five miles from Richmond. Lee wore a new full-dress uniform, "buttoned to the throat, and a sword studded with jewels," while Grant had on a blouse of dark blue flannel, unbuttoned in front, and carried no sword. At the point of victory he was embarrassed. "My own feelings," he wrote, "which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of Lee's letter, were sad and despondent." They talked a long time of things in general, of the armies, and finally the matter of surrender was reached. Lee said that the privates owned their own horses and it would prove a great hardship if they should have to forfeit them to the Union. Grant conceded the point, and let the men go out on parole with their horses, so that they could use them for the spring ploughing on their "little farms." "Each officer and man," he wrote, "will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authorities so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they may reside." These terms far exceeded his powers, but Lincoln made no objections when he read them, and even exclaimed many times, "Good! All right! Exactly the thing!"

The war was over! There were only Johnston's remnants to be taken, and Sherman was already dispatched after them. *Laus Deo* was on every lip. Flags were displayed, and meetings were held all over the country. A day of thanksgiving was specially set aside. Lincoln, tall and gaunt, threw his long arms over Stanton's short stocky frame, and weeping thus embraced him for joy. As to the question of

what to do with the "Confederate gentlemen," as he once called them, Lincoln had one thought—leniency. Someone suggested that Davis be hanged. "Let us judge not," he said, "that we be not judged." He followed this with one of his telling stories:

"When I was a boy in Indiana I went to a neighbour's house one morning and found a boy of my own size holding a coon by a string. I asked him what he had, and what he was doing. He said: 'It's a coon. Dad cotched six last night, and killed all but this poor little cuss. Dad told me to hold him until he came back, and I'm afraid he's going to kill this one too! and oh, Abe, I do wish he would get away!' 'Well, why don't you let him loose?' 'That wouldn't be right! and if I let him go, Dad would give me hell. But if he would get away himself, it would be all right.' Now, if Jeff Davis and those other fellows will only get away, it will be all right. But if we should catch them, and I should let them go, 'Dad would give me hell.'"

On the 14th Dana came to him to ask whether a warrant of arrest should be sent out for one of Davis's Cabinet members who was about to escape to Canada. Lincoln answered: "If you get hold of an elephant by the hind leg and he is running away, you had better let him go."

On that same day, the 14th of April 1865, he discussed reconstruction with the Cabinet. He was anxious to get the State governments in operation as soon as possible. He wished to have his plan at work before the December session of Congress. "No one need expect me to take any part in hanging or killing of



*A. Lincoln*



these men," he said, "even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, let down the bars, scare them off!" And he threw up his hands as if he were scaring away sheep. "Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union."

He greeted Grant, who came in on that day, with especial warmth. There would soon be good news, he said, for he had had a dream about a vessel, the same kind of dream which came to him before Antietam, Murfreesboro and Vicksburg. Grant only answered that Murfreesboro was no victory and had no important results.

He had been telling these last days of a dream that had come to him. He had retired late one night, having waited for important dispatches from the front:

"I could not have been long in bed when I fell into a slumber, for I was weary. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. It was light in all the rooms, every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the east room, which I entered. There I

met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. 'Who is dead in the White House?' I demanded of one of the soldiers. 'The President,' was his answer; 'he was killed by an assassin!' Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which awoke me from my dream. I slept no more that night; and although it was only a dream I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since."

At night he went to the theatre with his wife, together with a Major Rathbone and another guest, three who after the dreadful night were never to be of right mind again. A little after ten o'clock, in the midst of the performance, an actor, but not one of the company playing, had let himself into the President's box, locked the door, and pressing a revolver behind his ear, shot him, crying, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" which was the motto of the State of Virginia. In jumping from the box his spur caught in the flags which draped it, and his leg was broken. Wounded as he was, he reached the door of the theatre, jumped upon a horse which he had waiting for him, and escaped. In the first hush of surprise a voice called out, "The President is shot." Then there was tumult, and a rush for the doors.

The bullet had pierced Lincoln's brain, and he sank forward in his chair, unconscious, no cry escaping from his lips. He was carried to a little house across the street. All night through, until twenty-two minutes



past seven in the morning, his giant frame struggled with death. As he breathed his last, Stanton, weeping, exclaimed, "Now he belongs to the ages."

His assassination was part of a general plot to kill the Cabinet Ministers. Seward had been attacked that same night, but was not killed, and rumour had it that the whole Cabinet had been exterminated.

All night the City of Washington tramped back and forth in front of the little house opposite Ford's theatre. When the news was telegraphed throughout the country, it pulled down its gay flags and draped its homes in black, even to the little isolated farmhouses of the interior. The people felt suddenly that someone who had been very near to them was gone. They lingered long over his body in death. It was borne back from Washington to Springfield, his home, over the exact route he had travelled after his first election as President in 1861. In Baltimore, in Philadelphia, in Harrisburg, in Indianapolis, in almost the exact spot where he had stood and spoken to the people who had come to look upon their new President four years before, they now placed his bier. When the body reached Springfield his face had become shrunken and black. "Would that we who had known him in life had not known him in death," they cried.

The sudden snatching away of him brought a sudden realization of his powers. He became martyr and hero at once. The abolition of slavery, the undertaking of the war and the successful close of it, the preservation of the Union and the unassuming gentleness with which these colossal tasks were carried through, raised him to the heights of a legendary demi-god. Even

before the dictum of history passed its verdict of approval upon him, the masses of both Europe and America hailed him as their great leader. He became the Emancipator, the Friend of the People, the Martyr for their Cause.

In America the mourning was deepest, for they still had great need of him. Storms were brewing, and the waters that the Ship of State was yet to travel upon were black and troubled. They could ill afford untried hands at the helm. And above all it flashed across them that they had always loved the large pilot with the gnarled hands, who had brought them safely through the dreadful tempest. The great anguish that arose at their sudden loss is best given by Walt Whitman, himself a man of the people.

### O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

Oh, the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen, cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! Rise up and hear the bells,  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the  
shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces  
turning;

Here, Captain! dear father!  
 This arm beneath your head!  
 It is some dream that on the deck  
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
 The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and  
 done,  
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
 Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!  
 But I with mournful tread,  
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
 Fallen, cold and dead.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LINCOLN AND THE UNION

**E**VEN in the most cursory review of Abraham Lincoln's life it becomes evident that there was something beyond mere patriotism which inspired him in his efforts to maintain the integrity of the United States. His significance to-day comes from a deeper cause than the "saving of the Union." It lies in the social ideals he represented, and which animated his acts. They are the beacon lights by which the average American is trying to guide his political course to-day.

Two conceptions were clear in Lincoln's mind when he undertook the war. One, that the Union based on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution carried out successfully the American ideal of government—equal economic opportunity for all. Second, that the freedom promised by this ideal could not be maintained by a division of the Union. "Physically speaking," he said, "we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them."

Lincoln said this in his first Inaugural Address in 1861, and he acted upon this idea immediately on his accession to power. The West, which was half Southern and which understood the nature of the Southerner better than the East, readily agreed with him. The East, however, even the most Republican East, could

not quite see this oneness of the Union. Still before their eyes were the outlines of the State constitution and State borders of their school geographies and histories. They did not know the long flowing rivers and wide valleys of the West, with the result that they theorized and "believed" in State rights as much as the South.

At the time of the war the South urged this belief as a *casus belli* and the North happened to repudiate it. It never could have been a principle strong enough either to prevent war or cause war. Both the South and the North had certain purposes in going to war, which were far deeper and more vital than the abstract legal theory whether the states had a constitutional right to secede from the Union or not. To hide their main purpose the slave-holders almost successfully swept the South with the cry of "rights." Especially did this cry succeed with the youth who from a spirit of adventure rushed to the front at the first bugle-call. "We disbelieve in slavery," they said, "but we fight for State rights."

There was so much reiteration of the statement that the war was being fought to maintain the principle of State rights that historians writing soon after the war give it as one of its causes. But the men who undertook the war understood the facts far better.

It was not the right to secede that was questioned, but the purpose of the secession, the form of government that was to be replaced after this right was gained. No American statesman, not Jefferson, not even Hamilton, not Lincoln, ever disclaimed the right of the people to revolution. Lincoln went so far as to reaffirm this

principle in his first Inaugural Address, when he was speaking to a country already at fever heat over the problems before it. It was patent to the men of the time that not a secession but a civil war was attempted, and secession but cloaked a revolt of a reactionary class in the Union.

The war was not fought therefore on the abstract principle of the right of the South to form their own institutions, but over the institutions themselves. It was a struggle between conflicting economic interests, and though it was apparently a war of the sections, it was in the fullest sense a civil war—a clash over the control of the machinery of one and the same Government and not a mere sectional struggle.

No one understood this more quickly and more thoroughly than the West, or than Lincoln, its best and truest representative. The East was not so quick to see it, and the South showed a far greater hostility to the candidate of the West, Lincoln, than they showed against his Eastern rival, Seward. Over and over again Lincoln said, "There is no line, straight or crooked, suitable for a national boundary line upon which to divide." The West, he said, belongs not to one State or to another, but to the nation as a whole. This rich section must have egress to the ocean, it must be allowed to develop its resources, it must follow out its natural destiny, which was that of the individual small landholder. "It is the great body of the Republic. The other parts are but marginal borders to it."

Emerson, who did not have to be as politic as Lincoln, could express the truth more bluntly—that

the Federal Government was put on the defensive! After two years of war he came to see that the battlefield would have been as large with secession permitted as it was with secession fought. "If we had consented to a peaceable secession of the rebels," he said, speaking on the Emancipation Proclamation, "the divided sentiment of the Border States made peaceable secession impossible, and the slaves on the border, wherever the border might be, were an incessant fuel to rekindle the fire. Give the Confederacy New Orleans, Charleston and Richmond, and they would have demanded St Louis and Baltimore. Give them these, and they would have insisted on Washington. Give them Washington, and they would have assumed the army and navy, and, through these, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. It looks as if the battlefield would have been at least as large in that event as it is now."

The truth of this became evident during the war, when the South fostered a North-western Confederacy which was ultimately to join with it. By its acts it accepted the idea of a civil war as well as the North, and by its attacks upon the National Government was the first to force the struggle in that direction. In one sense, the war was the French Revolution of America, with this difference, that here it was the aristocrat, the great landlord, who undertook the offensive against the small property-holder, in the desperate hope of maintaining an already defeated position.

Fundamentally, however, the two opposing classes which struggled for political power were much more closely allied than the aristocrat and the petty bourgeois of France. The structure of Southern society was

simple, and to the student of evolutionary history uninteresting; a condition as primitive as in Judea, in which the free lands forced the tying down of labour to the soil for the benefit of large landlords. Its history could be worked out by the mere formula, even without the aid of specific detail. When it found itself hemmed in by opposing forces it attempted the time-worn means of a political *coup d'état* to maintain its power.

Its rival was much more interesting. A breath of the new and the modern permeated its being. The free land of the West, which produced slavery in the South, in the North acted as the safeguard of economic and political liberty. It produced ideals of democracy and economic justice which, though they were never tested by the generation which uttered them sincerely enough, were temporarily in actual application by virtue of the free and generous nature about them. Thus America with her ideals of the eighteenth century, born of France, could, unlike her sister Republic, put them into practice for a period of almost a hundred years, or until the free lands were gone.

It must be admitted that there were contradictions and compromises from the very beginning. The property-ridden constitution, where even slavery was accepted, the class form of government, where suffrage was made dependent on property, and the thwarting of the will of the people by vetoes of the Senate or the President or the Supreme Court, cannot be called pure democracy; yet despite all this the ideal of an economic democracy was for the majority attainable at the time, and the crises arising from the compromises and contradictions were for the future generations to solve, and



not for the fortunate ones enjoying the bounties of the new society.

There is a manifest lack of statesmanship and lack of sufficient anxiety for the condition of the future of the nation in the compromise of the founders of the Republic and the men following them, including Lincoln. On the other hand, they had a utilitarian and pragmatic view of their ideals, which saved them from hypocrisy. Only minorities have ever profited by the revolutions that heretofore had come. Actually to demand that the doctrine of equal economic opportunity then in application be put into practice for all and for all time would mean, as we can see to-day, a denial of perpetual ownership to the class in power. This was a hopeless demand at the time, for the Revolution and the struggles leading up to the War of Secession, despite the doctrines and ideals which were expounded, was only a struggle between first comers over the ownership and control of property.

The ideal of Jefferson, and of Lincoln, who inherited his philosophy, was a nation of small farmers, who might labour for hire in their youth, but who were later to acquire small homesteads for themselves, while their liberties were to be maintained, not by vesting them in a majority, but by negating as much as possible the function of government.

This felicitous state actually existed for three-quarters of a century, and still existed in Lincoln's time, and was supposed to continue for ever. However, in 1862 Lincoln wrote that "there are already among us those who, if the Union be preserved, will live to see it contain 250,000,000." He counted on the ratio

of increase of population that had existed in these first seventy years of the country's founding. How he hoped to maintain the perpetual right of the individual to acquire property freely and the perpetual state wherein a large reserve property, ever in abundance, was to lie unacquired, is not known. Even at a rate of increase in population much lower than he counted upon, the free lands were already gone by 1890.

Lincoln was blind to all this, though even in his day there were men who foresaw the danger of unlimited ownership, and a radical free-soil movement arose which reached its height about 1850. Lincoln, who remained, as he described himself, "a Western free-state man," and a Henry Clay Whig, was not in sympathy with this movement. It went farther than his natural conservatism would permit him to go. The non-extension of slavery, he thought, would facilitate the free-soil movement (which it did), and was the first barrier to that goal of economic equality which had to be removed.

The radical free-soil movement reached its height in Wisconsin, where a Bill, which proposed that the homestead should be practically inalienable on the one side, and on the other that it should be forbidden that anyone inherit more than 160 or 320 acres, almost passed in the Legislature of 1851. The general demand of the moment was for all citizens to have the right to a homestead, a demand quite feasible at the time, for there was more than enough land for all.

Up to the time of the war land sold at \$1.25 an acre, supposedly to homesteaders, but more often to

speculators and land companies, who later put their own price to the actual settler. The history of America is the history of land speculation, in which the most illustrious names are involved, from George Washington to gentlemen in the Senate who dabbled with the lands acquired from the Mexican War. Lincoln, the representative of the genuine homesteader, stands out remarkably free from the temptation of land deals, though as surveyor he had as much chance for such indulgence as Washington.

During the war, and for a decade after, homesteads were offered absolutely free to all comers, and an attempt to consummate the American ideal of equality was made by this free distribution of land. However, it must have been patent to Lincoln and other American democrats that a "distributive community," as someone called it, could not be maintained when freedom of economic opportunity meant also freedom to accumulate wealth. Within forty-one days after the passage of the Homestead Act Congress authorized the giving away of 23,500,000 acres of the public domain to private corporations. It also, far from being *laissez faire*, as was supposed, aided transportation enterprises by offering to guarantee bonds issued by the companies to the amount of \$65,000,000.

The uniting of the Free-soil Party with the anti-slavery factions, instead of being a more radical step, was in reality a more conservative one, for instead of looking to a control of wealth as a means of eliminating the feared and obnoxious large landlord class, as in the measure to limit inheritance, it contented itself only with the non-extension of that class, and left the prin-

ciple of free acquisition and inheritance of wealth intact.

Lincoln, who was against the large capitalist, as he was against the landed aristocracy represented by the slaveholder, was not opposed to the giving of land grants and subsidies to railroads, for in this case the land had only a speculative value. The land was given instead of the much more needed money, and the prospective sale of the land to the people of the towns and cities that might be built on that land by virtue of the improved transportation did not necessarily throw the railroads into the large landlord class. Not only, it was argued, was it a means of bringing greater prosperity to the whole community, but they were in truth only lending themselves money, for as each man could have a little homestead, so each man could have a small number of shares in the stock of the railroad company.

Internal improvements were clamoured for from the beginning of the century, and the building of roads and canals was forced upon the State governments, not for the creation of a plutocracy, but in aid of the small property-holder. Lincoln's first public utterance as a young man of twenty-two was a strong plea for internal improvements, and as a member of the State Legislature of Illinois he fostered all the plans in that direction.

It was natural, then, that when the small property-owner actually came into his own, through the election of Lincoln, he should apply the policies he was using in the State governments to the country as a whole.

The contradiction was not between the practice and the theory, but between the ideal and the theory. The

ideal was an equal economic opportunity for all, the theory that small private holdings could consummate that ideal. Knowing only of the past, the one thing that was feared was the most obvious curse of the past, the large landlord. The revolt against the old world that animated Jefferson and the Federalists, and was passed on to the generations of Americans following, was the revolt of the large landlord through the realization that through him came all the evils of aristocracy and class rule.

Jefferson had no conception of the plutocracy. The country was an idyllic state of small farmers; the city was largely composed of mobs of sailors and journey-men artisans, and a floating proletariat who might at any moment, as long as there was unoccupied land, enter the farmer class.

Lincoln of necessity knew more of the capitalist than did Jefferson, and often he addressed himself to him as well as to the landowner. But he did not conceive his significance. He saw the capitalist born, but he did not see the colossal height, unprecedented in any previous civilization, to which he was to grow. This is not to be wondered at, for the capitalist was born from the conception of the inalienable and individual right to property, plus the miraculous factor of human invention. The latter factor was unlooked for and could not have been foretold. It was this unknown quantity that ate up the land much more quickly than Lincoln had calculated, and by monopolies and trusts created a class stronger and more firmly intrenched than the large landlord, and left the unpropertied as powerless to acquire property or to enlarge what they

had as they had been under the landlord aristocracies of Europe or the South.

Lincoln had not the same excuse for his failure to foresee this as had Jefferson, for already in the fifties the railroads were being laid, patents for thousands of inventions were being issued by the patent office every year, and industries were rising so rapidly that a very large part of the population were becoming working-men. It is difficult to understand on what grounds he based his hope that each individual working-man would sooner or later find himself in the small propertied class.

With the revolution that was taking place in transportation, the ideal of the small landlord proprietor became translated into the ideal of the small capitalist, so that even the large fortunes of the Astors and the Vanderbilts were in no way frowned at. There was no fear at the time of over-concentration of wealth. The curious shibboleth that the American social order went from "shirt-sleeve to shirt-sleeve in three generations" helped to colour roseate any divinings into the future. The doctrine came of the overthrow of primogeniture, and it was firmly believed that the generation following the one that acquired property would surely lose it, and the third would have to begin with sleeve rolled up, true sons of toil. Thus no class, no aristocracy, not even inheritance, was possible, and an economic democracy was happily established for all time. It took fifty years of monopolies and trusts for the small capitalist to realize that he was being cut off from the spoils, and to view the Rockefellers and the Morgans of to-day with the alarm that had filled the small Western

farmer at the sight of the long-stretching tentacles of the large landlord of the South.

But at the moment it was not foreseen that in the overthrow of that class by the war an equivalent class would spring up in the North composed of the large manufacturer, the large railroad man and the "money magnate," who would own the industries and wealth of the country as firmly as the landlord owned the limited acres of land. With this new capitalist the absorption of property into one class continued, and the American ideal, economic democracy, has been again overthrown.

The South, composed of large landlords, and accepting the fact of class rule, had asked the North all along what difference there was between labour for hire or labour as a slave, when the private ownership of capital and property makes the one labourer as fixed in his condition as the other. Where then would come in the basic American principle of an equal economic opportunity for all?

Lincoln readily agreed that if the one labourer were as fixed in his condition as the other, the difference would be small, if any. But he denied the existence of such a fact. As far as the generation around him was concerned, he spoke the truth. He was not yet fixed in his condition. The labourer was becoming a small capitalist as fast as the lands were opened to him. His own words give both the ideal of American economy and the true picture of how closely that ideal was consummated even at his time.

" . . . The insurrection," he wrote in his annual message of 1862, "is largely if not exclusively a war upon

the first principle of popular government—the rights of the people. . . .

“ . . . . It is the effort to place capital on an equal footing with, if not above, labour, in the structure of Government. It is assumed that labour is available only in connection with capital; that nobody labours unless somebody else, owning capital, somehow by the use of it induces him to labour. This assumed, it is next considered whether it is best that capital shall hire labourers, and thus induce them to work by their own consent, or buy them, and drive them to it without their consent. Having proceeded thus far, it is naturally concluded that all labourers are either hired labourers or what we call slaves. And, further, it is assumed that whoever is once a hired labourer is fixed in that condition for life.

“ Now, there is no such relation between capital and labour as assumed, nor is there any such thing as a free man being fixed for life in the condition of a hired labourer. Both these assumptions are false, and all inferences from them are groundless.

“ Labour is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labour, and could never have existed if labour had not first existed. Labour is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights. Nor is it to be denied that there is, and probably always will be, a relation between labour and capital producing mutual benefits. The error is in assuming that the whole labour of the community exists within that relation. A few men own capital, and that few avoid labour themselves, and with their capital hire or buy another few to labour for them. A large majority belong to neither class—neither work for others nor have others working for them. In most of the Southern States a majority of the whole people, of all colours, are neither slaves nor masters; while in the Northern a large majority



are neither hirers nor hired. Men with their families—wives, sons and daughters—work for themselves, on their farms, in their houses, and in their shops, taking the whole product to themselves, and asking no favours of capital on the one hand nor of hired labourers or slaves on the other. It is not forgotten that a considerable number of persons mingle their own labour with capital—that is, they labour with their own hands and also buy or hire others to labour for them; but this is only a mixed and not a distinct class. No principle stated is disturbed by the existence of this mixed class.

“Again, as has already been said, there is not, of necessity, any such thing as the free hired labourer being fixed to that condition for life. Many independent men everywhere in these states, a few years back in their lives, were hired labourers. The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labours for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy land or tools for himself, then labours on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him.

“This is the just and generous and prosperous system,” he goes on to say, “which opens the way to all—gives hope to all, and consequent energy and progress and improvement of condition to all.”

It is a significant fact that Lincoln believed he could maintain the “just and generous and prosperous system” without the abolition of slavery. The limiting of slavery was sufficient to give the free lands to the majority, and it was with majorities that he dealt. This forced limiting might in the long run cause a gradual abolishment, due to a lack of feeding—a suffocation; but the question from the point of view of slavery in the slave states did not trouble him very much. It was an unfortunate state of affairs, from which, for the time being, he saw no way out. For

the future only a separation of the races seemed to him the solution of what he called the negro problem.

In the meantime the preservation of the Union, whether with slavery or without, provided it was not extended to the territories, could maintain the ideal of American society. Lincoln contended that the framers of the Constitution looked to an ultimate abolishment of slavery, and not at all to the national recognition of it, as was demanded by the South, and almost carried out by the Dred Scott decision.

He made the best argument for this contention in his Cooper Union speech in 1860. The passage of the North-West Ordinance showed clearly, he said, the policy of the Government, and the statement of Washington to Lafayette that he considered the prohibition of slavery a wise measure, and that he hoped there should at some time be a confederacy of free states, showed the sentiment of even Washington, a slaveholder himself, on the subject. Jefferson also looked towards the ultimate abolition of slavery. This was to take place by the suppression of the slave trade, by the non-extension of slavery, and by the emancipation of slaves in the slave states. No one contended at the time, and Lincoln heartily agreed with them, that the Federal Government had the power to abolish slavery where that institution already existed, nor that it was necessary to do so to attain the ultimate abolition of it.

Already the extension of slavery was defeated in Kansas and California, and the election of the Republican candidate defeated it before the people at

large. It was therefore that, in comparison with the question of Union, Lincoln seemed very lenient and almost callous to the question of slavery in the slave states, or as a Federal policy. In his hesitancy to proclaim emancipation, in his proclamations of amnesty, in his outline for the new governments of Louisiana and Maryland, he showed clearly that he did not consider that the condition of the Negro in the South affected the greater problem of the ultimate maintenance of the so-called free institutions of America.

The Union had existed for eighty-seven years, half slave and half free, and though he pronounced it an impossible condition for any Government to sustain long, he was in no haste to make the adjustment. He showed great anxiety over the direction the Government was taking, but not at all in the speed it took to reach its goal.

As President he was no longer of the opposition, but of the Administration. His standards had to be modified to the demands of expediency. The restored Union was to be composed of elements which he, as representative, could not oppose too rigidly, or even ignore. He was very willing to accept Louisiana on 12,000 votes out of her 55,000 qualified voters and not question too deeply what the remaining 43,000 would do once that State received its full power in the Union.

The Union, he argued, based on the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, was infallible, and "gave liberty not alone to the people of the country but hope to all the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights

would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance."

It was this naïve conviction, much more conservative than Seward's, who accepted a higher law above the Constitution, and which did not take into account the compromises it offered and the contradictory phrases of its promise of liberty, that made Lincoln so lenient with the class he was trying to subordinate. Not only his policy of reconstruction, but his whole manner of carrying on the war, was that of a lenient father. The child was asking too much, but even at the moment of restraining him he was anxious to give him all he could—much more than the other children desired or ultimately permitted.

It is not strange, then, that as the war progressed his simple formula should fall short of the great struggle that he had started. He saw less and less the historical necessity for the clashes which the compromises in the Constitution forced upon his generation. The liberty he conceived of could have been maintained with slavery firmly entrenched in the slave states, with the great landlord still holding his share in the general government, and with the small capitalist of the West restricted to power in his own section. For this there was no need of the dreadful holocaust of war, of the forced expropriation of property, and of the humbling and disqualifying from the Federal Government of a whole section of the Union.

More and more he found himself nonplussed by the sad riddle, and this materialist of the primeval forests began to play with a thought, not usually permitted to statesmen, that the nation was a puppet in the

hand of a Divine Power, whose hidden purposes it was forced blindly to obey. This thought came to him towards the end of the first year of the war, and as we have seen, dwelt with him towards the very last, creating one of the most eloquent passages in his second Inaugural Address:

“The Almighty has His own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.’ If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’ ”

## CHAPTER XV

### LINCOLN AND THE NEGRO

**B**EST of all to call Lincoln *the executive*, the arch-representative of the people. He held the pulse of the nation, he had the gift of expressing its final opinion. That gift was not *cérébrale*, it did not come from an intellectual summing-up, but because he was flesh of its flesh, having deep within him the conflicting desires and convictions of the American people.

His attitude towards slavery and the Negro, therefore, came from as firm a personal bias as from an understanding of the needs of the situation. And his personal bias was typically American, opportunistic, without thought of the future, compromising, and with a sad, futile humanism which left him uncertain whether it sprang from a personal hostility to the subject race or the knowledge of the hostility of his fellow-citizens.

His hesitancy to act in the favour of the Negro, even after the exigencies of war and politics demanded such steps, showed a strong and driving conviction that there was no place for the Negro in his social philosophy.

He was opposed to slavery on principle, but he was not only ready to compromise with the institution itself, but was also ready to compromise with the principles that underlay it. Not only did he not want to disturb slavery in the states where that "institution"

already existed, but he did not want the Negro to live in freedom side by side with the white in the new territories for which he was fighting. He could not conceive of the two races enjoying the same political and social privileges. His democracy was a white man's democracy. It did not contain Negroes, as it did not contain slaves or labourers "fixed in that condition for life," or landlords or large capitalists. It was the democracy of the small white farmer.

He was remarkably unchanging in his point of view. From his first public utterance on the subject of slavery as a young man of twenty-eight, to his Emancipation Proclamation and his innumerable other statements concerning slavery and the Negro, he held a consistent and fixed policy. He was firmly convinced against the extension of slavery—slavery was a wrong to the slave—but of more vital importance—it was a wrong to the white man. "If Judge Douglas does not like the negro," he said, "let him not bring him out into the new lands—let that remain for the white."

Farther than this white man's conviction against the economic, and being somewhat of a practical materialist, therefore moral, value of slavery he would not go.

In his first public utterance in 1837 he protested against certain pro-slavery resolutions which were passed by the Illinois Legislature. Slavery, he declared, was founded on both injustice and bad policy, but he carefully added, he considered the promulgation of abolition doctrines to tend rather to increase than to abate its evils. This negative anti-slavery statement is the key-note of his conviction. For a

young statesman at the beginning of his career to fear the promulgation of the abolition of an evil which he considers both an injustice and a bad policy showed a yielding to the aggressive slave-holder. The national exigency demanded a much more positive programme, if the calamity of an internecine war was to be averted. Even Washington had a broader outlook upon the country's problem, and his statement that his first wish was to see some plan adopted "by which slavery in this country may be averted," showed a care for the future.

A decade later we find Lincoln bringing in a resolution to Congress, suggesting gradual and compensated emancipation in the district of Columbia, which was only meant as an expression of the Federal Government on the subject, and could have no immediate bearing. But even this mild policy, the effect of which could only be felt in the nation's attitude towards new territories, he considered too hostile to the slave-owners, and a few months later he brought in a resolution in order "to conciliate divergent interests," which provided for the extension of the Fugitive Slave Law over the same district.

When he emerged from that curious lapse in his life which lasted from his return from Congress in 1843 to the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise—a time, as Herndon who knew him best said, when the "iron entered the soul"—he still held the same intellectual position on these great questions. The years of crisis did change the nature of his being, which was peculiarly attuned to what the American politician calls harmony—more often



another name for surrender of principle. It was true, Lincoln never retreated from the position that slavery was not to be extended, but it is a grave question whether the farmer of the West would ever have permitted him to do so. We must deal with his conceptions before he became President, and with his policies that failed, for in those the true Lincoln appeared.

A strong and active Abolition movement was going on, based on moral and intellectual grounds, which Lincoln saw close at hand, but which he never joined. Herndon, his law partner for twenty intimate years, was an ardent Abolitionist, in close touch with the leaders of New England. Lincoln knew of these men and their work. He may have sympathized with them, but the movement never called him. While Herndon joined the Free-Soil Party and the New Liberty Party, Lincoln remained an old line Whig, a Clay man, and canvassed the country for Taylor. It was Herndon who signed his name to the call for the Bloomington Convention of the Republican Party in 1856, much to the horror of Mrs Lincoln's relatives and his own former law partners.

He came before the country in a series of joint debates with Douglas at the climax of his career. It was here that the question of slavery and the problem of the Negro in America was discussed from every angle, and it is easy enough to find Lincoln's exact position on these questions. He had to define them very clearly before audiences that were critical and ready to vote against a man who could not hold within himself the balance of all the contradictory sentiments on these questions.

In the very first debate, in Ottawa, Illinois, he

said definitely: "I agree with Judge Douglas. He (the Negro) is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in colour, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man."

This much-quoted statement, generally given to show the innate principles of freedom and justice which animated Lincoln, carries with it a fundamental contradiction, which he himself recognized. If social and political equality were forbidden the Negro, and the whites must remain socially and politically superior and dominant, as he believed, then even after emancipation another condition would arise scarcely better than slavery itself. In 1854, in one of the Douglas debates, Lincoln asked what should be done with the slaves. "Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold slavery at any rate, yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon."

Knowing this, he surrendered still further to the anti-Negro arguments of "white domination," and in his debate in Charleston, Illinois, defined what he meant by equality:

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favour of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races—that I am not, nor ever have been, in favour of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this

that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favour of having the superior position assigned to the white race."

Over and over again he maintained that he did not want to interfere with the institution of slavery where it existed. He had "no legal right to do it and no inclination to." He yielded to the institution of slavery, he said, as had the framers of the constitution, with the hope that some day it would be ultimately extinct.

These statements might have been given for reasons of political expediency, were he not so insistent on adding that, with the extinction of slavery, he did not want the condition of a free white and a free black living together on the same land. "What I would most desire," he said, "would be the separation of the white and black races."

He saw no way of bestowing citizenship upon the Negro. "So far as I know, the Judge (Douglas) has never asked me the question before. He shall have no occasion to ever ask it again, for I tell him very frankly that I am not in favour of negro citizenship."

While referring to the Dred Scott decision, he said: "My opinion is that the different states have the power to make a negro a citizen under the Constitution of the United States, if they choose. The Dred Scott decision decides that they have not that power. If the State of Illinois had that power I should be opposed to the exercise of it. That is all I have to say about it."

If he was unwilling to bestow political equality, which is a principle inborn in every American, it goes without saying that he was against the social equality of the Negro, for here the American is innately unfriendly to that race. In the Charleston debate he said:

"I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I can just let her alone. I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife. So it seems to me quite possible to get along without making either slaves or wives of negroes. I will add to this that I have never seen, to my knowledge, a man, woman or child who was in favour of producing a perfect equality, social and political, between negroes and white men. . . . I will also add to the remarks I have made that I have never had the least apprehension that I or my friends would marry negroes if there was no law to keep them from it; but as Judge Douglas and his friends seem to be in great apprehension that they might, if there were no law to keep them from it, I give him the most solemn pledge that I will to the very last stand by the law of this State, which forbids the marrying of white people with negroes."

He gave the best definition of the Republican anti-slavery position as against that of the Abolitionist in his sixth debate at Quincy, Illinois:

"We have in this nation the element of domestic slavery. It is a matter of absolute certainty that it is a disturbing element. It is the opinion of all the great men who have expressed an opinion upon it, that it is a dangerous element. We keep up a controversy in regard to it. That controversy necessarily springs from difference of opinion, and if we can learn exactly—can reduce to the

lowest elements—what that difference of opinion is, we perhaps shall be better prepared for discussing the different systems of policy that we would propose in regard to that disturbing element. I suggest that the difference of opinion, reduced to its lowest terms, is no other than the difference between the men who think slavery a wrong and those who do not think it wrong. The Republican Party think it wrong—we think it is a moral, a social and a political wrong. We think it is a wrong not confining itself merely to the persons or the states where it exists, but that it is a wrong which in its tendency, to say the least, affects the existence of the whole nation. Because we think it wrong, we propose a course of policy that shall deal with it as a wrong. We deal with it as with any other wrong, in so far as we can prevent its growing any larger, and so deal with it that in the run of time there may be some promise of an end to it. We have a due regard to the actual presence of it amongst us, and the difficulties of getting rid of it in any satisfactory way, and all the constitutional obligations thrown about it. I suppose that in reference both to its actual existence in the nation, and to our constitutional obligations, we have no right at all to disturb it in the states where it exists, and we profess that we have no more inclination to disturb it than we have the right to do it. We go further than that: we don't propose to disturb it where, in one instance, we think the Constitution would permit us. We think the Constitution would permit us to disturb it in the district of Columbia. Still we do not propose to do that, unless it should be in terms which I don't suppose the nation is very likely soon to agree to—the terms of making the emancipation gradual and compensating the unwilling owners. Where we suppose we have the constitutional right, we restrain ourselves in reference to the actual existence of the institution and the difficulties thrown about it. We also oppose it as an evil so far as it seeks to spread itself. We insist on the policy that shall

restrict it to its present limits. We don't suppose that in doing this we violate anything due to the actual presence of the institution, or anything due to the constitutional guarantees thrown around it."

Considering as he did that slavery was a wrong, he announced openly to the people that he was not and never was in favour of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, that he did not stand pledged against the admission of any more slave states into the Union, that he did not stand pledged to the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia; that all he was impliedly if not expressly pledged to was the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in all the United States Territories. It was not, he said, that he was quibbling over the word "pledged," but that he firmly believed that under the Constitution of the United States the people of the Southern States were entitled to a Congressional Fugitive Slave Law. And with this same respect for the Constitution and the Union he would admit any state into the Union "if it should ever do such an extraordinary thing as to adopt a slave constitution uninfluenced by the actual presence of the institution among them."

"I do not wish to be misunderstood upon the subject of slavery in this country," he said. "I suppose it may long exist, and perhaps the best way for it to come to an end peaceably is for it to exist for a length of time."

After his election and before his inauguration the Congress of the United States had passed a far different 13th Amendment from the one passed five years later and heralded as "that great and sublime event" which lifted a race from bondage. In this former 13th

Amendment it was resolved that no constitutional amendment should be made in the future "which authorized or gave to Congress the power to abolish or interfere within any state with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labour or service by the laws of said state." Lincoln did not have to sign this amendment, but he approved of it in his Inaugural Address of 4th March. Only the immediate secession of South Carolina prevented the amendment from being ratified by the states. Had the South not seceded then there is no doubt that with Lincoln's influence it would have received the necessary two-thirds majority.

When the war commenced it became evident that slavery would be affected in some way by it. The Northern armies marching through the South confiscated slaves along with other property. In fact, the Negroes themselves came swarming into the army for protection and freedom. Each military commander, as he advanced into the enemy's territory, had the power of emancipation. It was this very exigency of the war which Lincoln fought hard to prevent for almost two years. He had no faith in the cries of the Abolitionists for the peremptory wiping out of the institution. He never heeded or respected their cries, deeming them a small sect of visionaries, without influence, scorned and laughed at by the people. "That abolition-sneak," Mrs Lincoln once said of Seward—a tell-tale phrase. While Boston was voting for Lincoln, Wendell Phillips and Garrison were being hounded on its streets. The Far East was not as earnestly anti-slavery as the West. Commerce and manu-

facture did not conflict with slavery as did farming; in fact, except for the question of tariff, they profited by it. The East was won away from the South not because of slavery, but because she became the market for the West, where the real slavery conflict took place. And in the West "abolition" and "anti-slavery" had two different meanings.

So convinced was Lincoln that the country was not for abolition that he did not heed the abolition demands of the Border States themselves, although usually so careful to conciliate them. He offended the radicals in Missouri by revoking General Frémont's Emancipation Proclamation, and by continually supporting the conservative faction in that state, to such an extent that they were irreconcilable to the very end, refusing absolutely to give him their votes at the time of his renomination for President.

But the Northern arms were unsuccessful. He could not restore the Union on the old basis, because, to quote his own phrase, "the longer the basket that holds the eggs is being shaken, the more eggs will break." Not being able to reconcile this more conservative element, which called for "the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is," he had to comply with the more radical elements of the North, who were supporting him in arms and by the vote. But this he did very tentatively and shrewdly. He issued a preliminary emancipation on 22nd September 1862, which was meant not as a blessing to the Negro, but as a warning to the Southerner in rebellion that his slaves would be confiscated if he did not pay allegiance to the Government. He gave him a hundred days in which



to lay down his arms. Had the Southerners been less bent upon victory they could have returned to the Union with the institution of slavery intact. Seeing that the Northern armies were ruthlessly abolishing the institution, Lincoln began working out several plans by which this forced abolition would be made more bearable to the expropriated slaveholder. His plan, on the one hand, was to urge Congress and the states that emancipation be gradual and compensated, and on the other that the Negroes be exported or colonized as soon as freed. He did not believe that freedom would benefit the Negro if left unprotected upon the hands of his embittered master. He was opposed to bestowing the suffrage upon the Negro, perhaps because he understood that the suffrage without economic power to sustain that equality which it promised was worthless. But he did not propose any means of his becoming economically free, which even Russia attempted to do, by the distribution of some of the land taken from the landlords among the ninety million liberated serfs. His solution of the problem was the separation of the races.

The history of Lincoln's acts from this time on is a history of his activity in the direction of gradual and compensated emancipation, and incessant minor attempts at colonization. He understood that colonization on a large scale was an impossibility, but he was sorely worried over the status of the Negro after freedom should have been accomplished, and he hoped by some successful example to set a precedent for colonization that would be followed. His great concern, however, lay in averting "the indispensable necessity for military

emancipation and arming of the blacks " by " appeals to the Border States for compensated emancipation." The Border States refused to adopt his resolution, which was that " the United States ought to co-operate with any state which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such state pecuniary aid, to be used by such state in its discretion to compensate for the inconvenience, public and private, produced by such change of system." Congress laid the resolution on the table, while the Border State representatives themselves refused to make any such resolution before their own Legislature. In July he made an appeal to them, saying:

" How much better for you and for your people to take the step which at once shortens the war and secures substantial compensation for that which is sure to be wholly lost in any other event! How much better to thus save the money which else we sink forever in the war! How much better to do it while we can, lest the war ere long render us pecuniarily unable to do it! How much better for you as seller, and the nation as buyer, to sell out and buy out that without which the war could never have been, than to sink both the thing to be sold and the price of it in cutting one another's throats? I do not speak of emancipation at once, but of a decision at once to emancipate gradually. Room in South America for colonization can be obtained cheaply and in abundance, and when numbers shall be large enough to be company and encouragement for one another, the freed people will not be so reluctant to go."

He wrote a personal letter to a Republican from Delaware, arguing against the plea of expensiveness that his plan of gradual emancipation with compensation entailed. He gave the price of the slaves and the cost of one day's war, saying that it was

three times the cost of all the slaves in Delaware. He computed the cost of the slaves in Delaware, Maryland, the district of Columbia and Kentucky at \$400 each, and argued that by eliminating eighty-seven days of war their cost would be covered. He had even worked out the manner and the instalments that were to be paid to the states if they accepted his plan.

In his special message to Congress of December 1863 he proposed a constitutional amendment which would give universal freedom, but this freedom was to be gradual, covering a period of thirty-seven years, up to 1st January 1900, and the slaves were to be paid for by the Government.

The Republican Congress was hostile to his suggestion that Northern money be used in compensating Southern slaveholders. Their interest lay neither in doing justice to the slaveholder nor the Negro, but in maintaining their own power, which they could do very well by emancipating the slave and enfranchising him, and by preventing him from emigrating to their lands by the legislation of the Western States. The Democrats, with reactionary blindness, refused to see the trend of the times, and strongly opposed Lincoln's measures on the ancient premise that they interfered dangerously with the domestic institutions of each state. It was therefore with relief on all sides that Lincoln's request from the House for \$180,000,000, to be used for compensating loyal slave-owners and an appropriation of \$20,000,000 for colonizing freed negroes came so late in the session that it was not considered.

While urging compensation, he was devising plans for the colonization of the freed Negro. Apart from

asking Congress for appropriations, he appealed to the Negro himself. As early as August 1862 he called a deputation of coloured men to him and urged them to colonize in Central America:

“ Your race is suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoys. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you. I do not propose to discuss this, but to present it as a fact with which we have to deal. I cannot alter it if I would. It is a fact about which we all think and feel alike, I and you. We look to our condition. Owing to the existence of the two races on this continent, I need not recount to you the effects upon white men, growing out of the institution of slavery. . . . The practical thing I want to ascertain is, whether I can get a number of able-bodied men, with a mixture of women and children, who are willing to go when I present evidence of encouragement and protection. Could I get a hundred tolerably intelligent men, with their wives and children, and able to ‘cut their own fodder,’ so to speak? If I could find twenty-five able-bodied men, with a mixture of women and children—good things in the family relation, I think—I could make a successful commencement. I want you to let me know whether this can be done or not. This is the practical part of my wish to see you.”

The coloured deputation answered, politely enough, that it would consider his proposition, but refused to take kindly to it, and it was learned in the end that

Central America, where he was to send them, did not want them. Later he obtained some sums of money from Congress, and an island was bought in the West Indies—Ile D'Vache. Several hundred Negroes were collected and put upon this unknown corner of the world. It turned out to be a poisonous, malarial country, covered with reptiles, and a ship had to be sent to bring back the few survivors. Nevertheless, he kept on with his experiments. There is one story told by Chittenden which shows how seriously he thought of this proposition:

"During one of his welcome visits to my office the President seemed to be buried in thought over some subject of great interest. After long reflection he abruptly exclaimed that he wanted to ask me a question.

"‘Do you know any energetic contractor?’ he inquired; ‘one who would be willing to take a large contract attended with some risk?’

"‘I know New England contractors,’ I replied, ‘who would not be frightened by the magnitude or risk of any contract. The element of prospective profit is the only one that would interest them. If there was a fair prospect of profit they would not hesitate to contract to suppress the Rebellion in ninety days.’

"‘There will be profit and reputation in the contract I may propose,’ said the President. ‘It is to remove the whole coloured race of the slave states into Texas. If you have any acquaintance who would take that contract, I would like to see him.’

"‘I know a man who would take that contract and perform it,’ I replied. ‘I would be willing to put you into communication with him, so that you might form your own opinion about him.’

"By the President's direction I requested John Bradley,

a prominent Vermonter, to come to Washington. He was at my office the morning after I sent the telegram to him. I declined to give him any hint of the purpose of my invitation, but took him directly to the President. When I presented him I said: 'Here, Mr President, is the contractor whom I named to you yesterday.'

"I left them together. Two hours later Mr Bradley returned to my office overflowing with admiration for the President and enthusiasm for his proposed work. 'The proposition is,' he said, 'to remove the whole coloured race into Texas, there to establish a republic of their own. The subject has political bearings of which I am no judge, and upon which the President has not yet made up his mind, but I have shown him that it is practicable. I will undertake to remove them all within a year.'"

He never gave up hope of the colonization of the Negro. After the 13th Amendment giving constitutional freedom to all the Negroes had been passed, he called in General Butler and discussed with him a plan of exporting the coloured soldiers to some foreign land, in Liberia, South America or Demerara.

" 'General Butler,' he said, 'I am troubled about the negroes. We are soon to have peace. We have got some one hundred and odd thousand negroes who have been trained to arms. When peace shall come I fear lest these coloured men shall organize themselves in the South, especially in the States where the negroes are in preponderance in numbers, into guerilla parties, and we shall have down there a warfare between the whites and the negroes. In the course of the reconstruction of the Government it will become a question of how the negro is to be disposed of. Would it not be possible to export them to some place, say Liberia, or South America, and organize them into communities to support themselves? Now, General, I wish you would examine the practicability of such exportation. Your

organization of the flotilla which carried your army from Yorktown and Fort Monroe to City Point, and its success, show that you understand such matters. Will you give this your attention, and at as early a date as possible report to me your views upon the subject.' I replied, 'Willingly,' and bowed and retired. After some few days of examination, with the aid of statistics and calculations, of this topic, I repaired to the President's office in the morning, and said to him: 'I have come to report to you on the question you have submitted to me, Mr President, about the exportation of the negroes.' He exhibited great interest, and said: 'Well, what do you think of it?' I said: 'Mr President, I assume that if the negro is to be sent away on shipboard you do not propose to enact the horrors of the middle passage, but would give the negroes the air-space that the law provides for emigrants.' He said, 'Certainly.' " Well, then, here are some calculations which will show you that if you undertake to export all the negroes—and I do not see how you can take one portion differently from another—negro children will be born faster than your whole naval and merchant vessels, if substantially all of them were devoted to that use, can carry them from the country: especially as I believe that their increase will be much greater in a state of freedom than of slavery, because the commingling of the two races does not tend to productiveness.' He examined my tables carefully for some considerable time, and then he looked up sadly and said: 'Your deductions seem to be correct, General. But what can we do?' I replied: 'If I understand you, Mr President, your theory is this: That the negro soldiers we have enlisted will not return to the peaceful pursuits of labouring men, but will become a class of guerillas and criminals. Now, while I do not see, under the Constitution, even with all the aid of Congress, how you can export a class of people who are citizens against their will, yet the Commander-in-Chief can dispose of soldiers quite arbitrarily.

Now, then, we have large quantities of clothing to clothe them, large quantities of provisions with which to supply them, and arms and everything necessary for them, even to spades and shovels, mules and waggons. Our war has shown that an army organization is the very best for digging up the soil and making intrenchments. Witness the very many miles of intrenchments that our soldiers have dug out. I know of a concession of the United States of Colombia for a tract of thirty miles wide across the Isthmus of Panama for opening a ship canal. The enlistments of the negroes have all of them from two to three years to run. Why not send them all down there to dig the canal? They will withstand the climate, and the work can be done with less cost to the United States in that way than in any other. If you choose I will take command of the expedition. We will take our arms with us, and I need not suggest to you that we will need nobody sent down to guard us from the interference of any nation. We will proceed to cultivate the land and supply ourselves with all the fresh food that can be raised in the tropics, which will be all that will be needed, and your stores of provisions and supplies of clothing will furnish all the rest. Shall I work out the details of such an expedition for you, Mr President?' He reflected for some time, and then said: 'There is meat in that suggestion, General Butler; there is meat in that suggestion. Go and talk to Seward, and see what foreign complication there will be about it. Then think it over, get your figures made, and come to me again as soon as you can. If the plan has no other merit, it will rid the country of the coloured soldiers.' "

The death of Lincoln, coming soon after, of course disturbed this plan to rid the country of the coloured soldiers.

Far from being discouraged by his failure to receive a response from Congress on the question of compensation, he planned a still greater request two months



before the end of the war. This was that Congress empower the President to pay \$400,000,000 to the respective slave states in proportion to their slave population in 1860.

His Cabinet unanimously vetoed the document, and folding it up with a sigh, he put it away, but not without a secret hope that he would be able to use it in the near future.

He was of his time and above his time. Walt Whitman said of him: "The invisible foundations and vertebræ of his character, more than any man's in history, were mystical, abstract, moral and spiritual—while upon all of them was built and out of all of them radiated, under the control of the average of circumstances, what the vulgar call *horse-sense*, and a life often bent by temporary but most urgent materialistic and political reasons."

If there was inconsistency in his nature the fault was America's, not his. The representative of a people cloaked in mystic words of freedom, which were only used to cover their property not themselves, it is no wonder that he almost despaired that any human justice could prevail that did not bring immediate material profit. Tentatively, and as a private suggestion, he wrote to the Governor of Louisiana that perhaps it were well to admit some of the coloured people "for an elective franchise, as, for instance, the very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help in some trying time to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom."

Slowly his demands grew with the needs. In the

Amnesty Proclamation he promised that the National Executive would not object "if the states would recognize and declare their (the Negroes') permanent freedom and provide for their education, which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a labouring, landless and homeless class."

That was his solution, if the Negro had to remain side by side with his former master—education and a qualified franchise. He had little hope that it would be accorded in the right spirit, he had little hope that the Negro would be ever permitted to rise out of his condition as a "labouring, landless and homeless class." If only some strange land would hold him!

And yet Frederick Douglass, the Negro orator and writer, himself born a slave, tells us that never did he meet a man more free from race prejudice—the first man in all his life in America who talked with him and who, in no single instance, reminded him of the difference between them—the difference in colour.

That is the Lincoln without public policies, the man Lincoln speaking to his neighbour, and no man was more at one with his neighbour than he. Even Douglass saw it. "While I felt I was in the presence of a great man," he said, "as great as the greatest, I felt as though I could go and put my hand on him if I wanted to, to put my hand on his shoulder."

"Dear to Democracy, to the very last!" cried Walt Whitman. True, he followed her "faltering dictates" to the very last. Had she learned to ask more, that veil of melancholy would have lifted from his face, and he would have learned, apt pupil that he was, to give more quickly of the largess of his nature.

## CHAPTER XVI

### LINCOLN, THE MAN

HERE was a man who dealt with people. No shams, no formulas, no traditions held him. As he broke his way through the Constitution he venerated, so he rode over the little rules of three that he had learned, to find the human equation. "The virtues of a good magistrate undo a world of mischief," said Emerson of him. Lincoln was the best of magistrates, and the mischief he undid will be told for all time, for he governed for men, not for laws.

This made him stand easily head and shoulders above the other men of his time. He ruled them with his indomitable will, with the overpowering melting strength of the sun, as in the fable of the contest between the sun and the wind. He bent the few to his way for the benefit of the many. He drew all the great lights of his day to his side, and then conquered them—Douglas, Seward, Chase, Frémont, M'Clellan—there were none left outside, for all were needed in the succour of the stricken nation. Against the will of the Cabinet he undertook the war, sent "bread to Anderson" in Fort Sumter, as he called it, and then when the inevitable occurred and the great war commenced, he still forced this same Cabinet to stand by him to do his will.

It was not an easy matter to accomplish. There were two men, the Secretary of State and the Secretary

of the Treasury, who looked upon him as an interloper, a superior in office by some freak chance. Seward's "Some Thoughts for a President's Consideration" came from an honest conviction that Lincoln was not the man for the place, and that he himself would have done better. As for Chase, he never marched so faithfully behind his master as did Seward, when after a few months he saw who "was the best of them all"; but faithfully or no, he marched. There were rumours of disruption and actual storms, but the crises never came. Somehow he had a quiet gift which "smoothed all things back again."

As he mastered his Cabinet, so he mastered his generals. He overthrew Frémont when that popular idol set himself up as dictator of the West and fought the enemy by manifestoes instead of arms. He feared the poor fighting more than the dictatorship, and Frémont went down. He did the same with M'Clellan, seeming not to trouble himself that these men had almost half the nation behind them. There was a task to be performed greater than politics. The nation had to be kept alive.

They too, like Chase, husbanded their wrath against him to the last, making futile attempts at displacing him in the presidential elections of 1864. But by that time "the great job," as he called it, was near its end, and so far had he impressed the people with his meaning that Whitman could write: "The only thing like a great and worthy idea vitalizing a party and making it heroic was the enthusiasm in '64 for re-electing Abraham Lincoln, and the reason behind that enthusiasm."

To be sure, the enthusiasm which Whitman saw was

slow in rousing itself, and did not storm all quarters alike. There was always a significance in his success which made his side identical with a righteousness and a cosmic order. He called himself merely a follower of events, yet it took a deep humanistic philosophy not to disregard their coming, and a miraculous quality of growth to be equal to their demands.

As he moulded the men of politics around him to perform his bidding, so he manipulated the army, changing generals overnight, ordering attacks, holding his strong hand continually on the lever of that machine.

It is simpler to direct an army than a political party, but when that army has political power, and the last word both in the army and in politics is given to the people, then indeed a giant will is needed, well directed and sure. He had to be the one man expression of the will of thirty million people—a divergent, scattered will. Even the North, which he was supposed to represent absolutely, was far from united on the question of the needs of the hour. The Abolitionists refused to fight for Union, on the ground that they wished no "covenant with hell." The commercial classes of the East voted war and freedom, but were not over-anxious to fight; the West was willing to fight, but was fearful of a freed Negro and his status in the new land it was struggling to acquire.

Fortunately there was dissension in the South itself, which Lincoln as President had to consider as part of the Republic he was administering. While Georgia was for slavery, it nevertheless was for Union, and if Virginia was anti-Union, it had a close bond with many of the other Border States in a prevailing anti-slavery sentiment.

He took the place of the Constitution and the Constituent Assembly, and made that mysterious summing up by himself which republics, even when founded on divergent interests, have learned to make. Beyond holding in his heart the people, the Republic itself, he was no iconoclast. No driving idea urged him onward. He undertook one of the greatest wars in history, unbound an entire race from slavery, preserved a nation, and yet stood tremulous and surprised at his own acts. He never leaped to meet the days—the future was always hidden; and yet he grew to meet it easily and well poised, as if its promise was long expected.

Renan said that the ardent soul looks for omens. Lincoln was ardent—the Republic was his faith. Her mysterious steps were guided by the Great Will. The hard-headed woodsman of the forest began to look for signs to read its meaning. A fatalism overcame him, which far from tying him helpless, drove him on, inspired.

Yet his tragedy lay in the fact that his own acts were out of harmony with the deeper tones of his nature. It pleased him to think he was maintaining the system he thought to be American, where each man tilled his little plot of earth, and where equality of opportunity went hand-in-hand with "the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." However, cradled as he was in these phrases, and believing in them himself, he saw only too well that slavery existed on the one hand, that monopolization of land was going on rapidly on the other, and that a large exploited working class was already arising in the industrial centres of the East.

This contradiction between the ideals of the nation and the reality of life, besides presenting a *cul de sac* for the future, left him sceptical as to the intentions of man. This made him opportunistic. It also made him tender. It gave him a Whitmanesque inclusiveness of all types, and a sad humanism which was the key to that peculiar leniency and gentleness that not only made his name so fabulous as the Great Pardoners, but made him hold his post as President with such grace and ease. He was never known to offend. On the other hand, he was never known to give in on an essential point.

No one around him knew him, for this gentle soul who, after a costly battle, spent his nights tramping up and down his room, weeping at the dead, would the next morning issue orders for a draft of troops that a Prussian war-lord would have hesitated to demand. Never did a more tender man of peace enter upon and resolutely prosecute so bloody a war. It was this gulf between his own nature and the thick jungle of life he was set to master that makes him a pathetic and yet heroic figure. He could not become callous to the individual suffering which the great crisis caused, and yet he continued unfalteringly. He who at the very first battle staggered out of the telegraph room of the War Department blinded with tears at the loss of his nearest and dearest friend, remembered towards the last each sorrowful sacrifice that went up to complete the "great job." The following letter to a Mrs Bixby towards the end of the war shows how ever-present was the thought of that sacrifice:

"DEAR MADAM,—I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

This contradiction between life and himself is even more poignantly brought out in his attitude toward the Negro. Never did a man enter upon an act of liberation which he himself knew was good and just with more trepidation and fear. Never was a man more ready to love his neighbour as himself, and yet feel constrained by circumstance to let a whole race continue in bondage.

His understanding of the weaknesses of the human heart, his constant reiteration that conditions make the man and not man himself, if it made him a sceptic, at least saved him from misanthropy. He never hated. He looked upon life with sadness, not bitterness. Strong, yet helpless before man-made events, he showed the pathetic characteristics of the great masses, of those who have suffered through the ages and have never understood why.

Fatalistic, he had no personal God. Herndon says he never used the name Jesus or Christ. He had no creed. In his later speeches the word God entered,



and in his second Inaugural we find, "If it be the purpose of the Almighty," but it is evident that he used the phrase in the classic conception of Fate. It is interesting that the suggestion to use the name of God in his State papers came from Chase, which Lincoln accepted.

His lack of political philosophy was another side of his lack of specific doctrines. His ardour made him religious in the sense that he bowed humbly before the great events of life which he could not control, yet he had no vision of a cosmic order. He was brought up among the sceptics and disbelievers of the pioneers. In his youth he read Volney and Paine. At twenty-six he wrote a small work on infidelity which unfortunately was burned by a zealous friend. As late as 1854 he made Herndon erase the name of God which he wrote in a speech. In his race for Congress in 1847 he was accused by his opponents of being an atheist, a charge he never denied. "He would die first," he said to Herndon.

He was a humanist above all, yet he felt himself to be an instrument in the great forces of life which had to come with the precision of laws. Herndon said:

"He waited upon the logic of events with more than a woman's patience, and at their blossoming-time seized his grand opportunities—caught the flow of time and tided himself thereon. Come what would, weal or woe victory or defeat, life or death, Lincoln was cool and calm, neither despairing nor exulting, praising nor blaming, eulogizing nor condemning. To shout or exult would be flying in the face of fate, or wooing her. So strong was this philosophy that it was a part of his being."

Later in life, when this sceptic had to become a man of action, when by sheer force of will he carried on a great war in the teeth of disasters, when events could no longer be looked on coldly as the gesture of a dice-thrower, it was then that a tinge of mysticism came into his philosophy. He sought to forestall events. It pleased him to read all the dreams in the Bible and he toyed with his own, speaking of one or two special dreams which he considered as auguries of good fortune or bad. There was one which came to him often, he said, and which presaged an event of great importance. He saw a ship badly damaged sailing away rapidly and Union vessels in close pursuit. There seemed also to be the close of a battle on land, the enemy routed, and the Northern forces in possession of an important position. He had this dream before Antietam, Gettysburg, Murfreesboro and Vicksburg, and it came to him again the last night of his life. There was another dream which came to him after the elections in 1860. There had been a "Hurrah, boys!" all day, he said, as the result of his election, and he was well tired out. He threw himself on the couch in his room, facing a bureau with a swinging glass. As he lay he saw himself reflected nearly at full length, but his face had two separate and distinct images. The tip of the nose of one was about three inches from the other. He said he was bothered by that and rose and looked in the glass, but the illusion vanished. On lying down he saw it a second time. He saw that one of the faces was much paler than the other. He rose and went away, and in the excitement of the hour forgot about it, except that now and then a memory

of it would come back to him and gave him a little pang as if something uncomfortable had happened. A few days later he tried the experiment again, and the thing came back. He told his wife about it, and she too seemed worried. It was a sign, she said, that he was to be elected to a second term of office, but the paleness of one of the faces was an omen that he should not live through the second term.

However, fortunately, it was not by his omens and dreams that he acted. The day's work was real, and the minutest details interested him. In the midst of the dispatches to generals and governors he found time to telegraph to various regiments in search of a man whose sentence he wanted to commute. It was the "butchering business," as he called it, the executions which took place in the army itself, which were especially abhorrent to him. To carry on the war in the face of the people, to draw the soldier out by the mere brute force of a Provost-Marshal General, and then to shoot him in his uniform when he tried to escape, conflicted sorely with his republican ideals of personal rights. He tried to evade inflicting the death penalty, using the merest shams for excuses, so that the generals complained on all sides that he was ruining the discipline of the army. He clung to the happy thought that a youth under eighteen should not be shot, and he gladly accepted a mother's evidence as to the date of her son's birth without much verification. If a deserter had once been wounded in battle he commuted his sentence, with the statement, "in blood is the remission of sins."

So well known was his clemency that the soldiers themselves wrote to him when sentence had been

passed. In one case he telegraphed to the commanding officer that the man's story was rather a bad one, "and yet he tells it so frankly that I am somewhat interested in him. Has he been a good soldier except the desertion? About how old is he?" In this case, with careful searching, he succeeded in finding an excuse for him, and his case went along with the others under the now famous formula: "Suspend sentence and send record for examination." Very often these records were never examined at all, but lay in a large pigeon-hole above his table which he called "leg cases." "How do I know how my legs would act in battle?" he said. Another favourite formula of his was: "Suspend execution of death sentence until further orders." "Does that pardon my boy?" asked a father, pleading for his son. "My dear man," he answered, "do you suppose I will ever send an order for your boy's execution?"

At times he would search the list of condemned in the newspapers and inquire for their records without waiting for the men's friends to intervene. Or in commuting one man's sentence he would ask if there were any more who were held under similar charges. Nevertheless, with all Lincoln's clemency, there were 267 men executed in the armies. Friday was execution day. "They are shooting a boy to-day," he would say; "I hope I have not done wrong to allow it." When urged by General Butler to be more strict, he frowned. "How could I have a butcher's day every Friday?" he asked. To another he answered: "Yes, Congress has taken the responsibility—and left the women to howl about me."



ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS SON TAD



The answer would be that he need not see the women to have them howl about him, but here he held to a distinct policy of seeing everyone who came. He did not want to be out of touch with the "plain people." He was their representative; he could not reach them through the officials and the heads of departments in Washington. "I will try to see you as I see everyone else," he wrote to strangers asking for interviews. For the first two years in the White House he could not pass from his room to the executive room without crossing a corridor crowded with visitors, each with his own little burden, anxious to get a word with him. Later he had a door cut which led directly into his reception room, but the corridor was still crowded. "Who is that woman crying in the hall; what is the matter with her?" he asked one day while in the telegraph office, and dropped the work in hand to attend to her case.

The personality of the man overflowed everywhere; even the usually unbending telegraph dispatches bear marks of it. There is a telegram to a Major-General asking if he should give a pass to a man who wanted to follow the army to pick up rags and cast-off clothing, and another to Grant, asking if he should give a pass to a Dr W. "who wishes to introduce 'Harmon's Sandal Sock' into the army." To his wife he telegraphed: "Tell Tad the goats and father are very well, especially the goats." Again in his daily telegrams to his wife that he was well he adds, "including Tad's pony and the goats."

Two letters to the actor, James H. Hackett, throw a sidelight on the sensibilities of the man. They

contain so much gentleness and modesty almost as if he were not sure of himself:

"MY DEAR SIR,—Months ago I should have acknowledged the receipt of your book and accompanying kind note; and I now have to beg your pardon for not having done so.

"For one of my age I have seen very little of the drama. The first presentation of *Falstaff* I ever saw was yours here, last winter or spring. Perhaps the best compliment I can pay is to say, as I truly can, I am very anxious to see it again. Some of Shakespeare's plays I have never read, while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are *Lear*, *Richard III.*, *Henry VIII.*, *Hamlet*, and especially *Macbeth*. I think nothing equals *Macbeth*. It is wonderful.

"Unlike you gentlemen of the profession, I think the soliloquy in *Hamlet* commencing 'Oh, my offence is rank,' surpasses that commencing 'To be, or not to be.' But pardon this small attempt at criticism. I should like to hear you pronounce the opening speech of *Richard III.* Will you not soon visit Washington again? If you do, please call and let me make your personal acquaintance."

Hackett printed this letter, which caused a response that was temperamental and came from the heart:

"My note to you I certainly did not expect to see in print; yet I have not been much shocked by the newspaper comments upon it. Those comments constitute a fair specimen of what has occurred to me through life. I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice; and have received a great deal of kindness, not quite free from ridicule. I am used to it."

And here again the telegraph files disclose his many-mooded nature. In the midst of military dispatches we find one to his wife, who was away



visiting: "Think you had better put Tad's pistol away; I had an ugly dream about him."

There is little wonder that dreams were ugly those days. Washington was the clearing centre of the wounded from the armies of the Potomac and the Middle West. Soon after Bull Run they were brought in on stretchers and ambulance waggons and cattle-cars, and placed upon the wharves until suitable accommodation was found. Almost every public building—museums, schools, churches—was converted into hospitals. Private homes were used. The wounded were never out of Lincoln's mind. He visited them in their wards, he addressed fairs to bring in money to aid in their comfort. He was the prime mover in building the Armory Square Hospital, which became the largest and best-organized hospital during the Civil War. He sent the seeds from the Agricultural Department which converted the grounds around it into a bower of blossoms. He became intimately connected with the wounded veterans, trying indeed to be the "Father Abraham" the soldiers called him.

And this man, going through new crises with each new day, opened Cabinet meetings by reading *Petroleum V. Nasby's Letters*, or *Recollections of A. Ward, Showman*, or went wandering through his rooms repeating in a sing-song voice: "Mortal man with feet of clay, here to-morrow, gone to-day." After his death two worn and well-thumbed copies were found of the *Nasby Letters* and the *Book of Copperheads*, both satires on the party in the North which sympathized with the South. He carried these books with him in his pocket, or they lay near at hand on his work-table, among documents

of state. His humour and wit are fabulous, his stories legion. He wound up arguments with anecdotes, more often coarse than delicate, but always telling.

He understood good poetry; he read Byron and Burns, and recited over and over again the speech from Hamlet beginning "Oh, my offence is rank," but naïve, lugubrious, sentimental verse had a special appeal for him. They seemed to fit into his everyday mood, and one poem has been quoted by many because of his fondness for it. For more than thirty years he recited "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud"—a long poem of innumerable stanzas, a few of which will suffice:

"Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud!

Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,

A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,

He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,

Be scattered around, and together be laid;

And the young and the old, and the low and the high,

Shall moulder to dust, and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved;

The mother that infant's affection who proved;

The husband that mother and infant who blest—

Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest. . . ."

He had many idiosyncrasies. He noticed the height of men, and was proud of his own great stature. "I rarely fail in taking a man's true altitude by the eye," he said. He had a penchant for measuring himself impromptu back to back with tall men whom he met, even on occasions of state. When the committee came to his home in Springfield to make the formal announcement that he had been nominated

for President, his first words after his acceptance were to the Governor of New York, who happened to be very tall: "Pray, Governor, how tall may you be?" Lincoln found himself to be an inch taller. With that beginning the embarrassing stiffness of the function wore away, and things went smoothly. Sherman said that when he first met Lincoln, in Washington, he took his hands in both of his, drew himself up to his full height, and looking at him steadily, said: "You are John Sherman. Well, I'm taller than you. Let's measure." Thereupon they stood back to back and someone announced that he was two inches taller than Sherman. But with Sumner, the radical Senator from Massachusetts, he could make no headway. "Sumner," said Lincoln, "declined to stand up with me back to back to see which was the taller, and made a fine speech about this being a time for uniting our fronts against the enemy and not our backs." Sumner was more his idea of a bishop, he said, though he confessed he had not much to do with bishops where he came from.

In all this he had no lack of dignity, for he was earnest and sincere. No one was known to call him by his first name when he grew to manhood. He was "Mr Lincoln" to everyone; "Old Lincoln" behind his back at the age of thirty-seven. It was the newspapers and the usual American candidate-talk which gave him the name of "Old Abe." No one who knew him personally felt near enough to him to make free with him. Humorous, genial, going out of his way to meet people, he remained courageous in his isolation, a detached personality where the problems of life were analyzed and solved undisturbed by anyone.

His personal appearance was odd in the extreme. It has been described by many persons, and it seems that his giant frame and awkward lines produced a far from favourable impression when first seen; but that his face, with its deep melancholy, its glowing eyes, always held something for even a passer-by which was never to be forgotten. "I see very plainly," said Whitman, "Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes always to me with a deep, latent sadness in the expression. . . . None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed."

The best pen picture of him is given by his friend Herndon:

"Mr Lincoln was six feet four inches high, and when he left the city of his home for Washington was fifty-one years old, having good health and no grey hairs, or but few, on his head. He was thin, wiry, sinewy, raw-boned; thin through the breast to the back, and narrow across the shoulders; standing he leaned forward—was what may be called stoop-shouldered, inclining to the consumptive by build. His usual weight was one hundred and eighty pounds. . . . His structure was loose and leathery; his body shrunk and shrivelled; he had dark skin, dark hair, and looked woe-struck. The whole man, body and mind, worked slowly, as if it needed oiling. Physically he was a very powerful man, lifting with ease four hundred, and in one case six hundred, pounds. Hence there was very little bodily or mental wear and tear in him.

"When he walked he moved cautiously but firmly; his long arms and giant hands swung down by his side.

He walked with even tread, the inner sides of his feet being parallel. He put the whole foot down flat on the ground at once, not landing on the heel. Hence he had no spring in his walk. His walk was undulatory—catching and pocketing tire, weariness and pain all up and down his person, and thus preventing them from locating. The first impression of a man who did not observe closely was that his walk implied shrewdness and cunning—that he was a tricky man; but, in reality, it was the walk of caution and firmness. In sitting down on a common chair he was no taller than ordinary men. His legs and arms were abnormally, unnaturally long, and in undue proportion to the rest of his body. It was only when he stood up that he loomed above other men.

“Mr Lincoln’s head was long, and tall from the base of the brain and from the eyebrows. His head ran backwards, his forehead rising as it ran back at a low angle, like Clay’s, and unlike Webster’s, which was almost perpendicular. The size of his hat measured at the hatter’s block was seven and one-eighth, his head being, from ear to ear, six and one-half inches. Thus measured it was not below the medium size. His forehead was narrow but high; his hair was dark, almost black, and lay floating where his fingers or the wind left it, piled up at random. His cheeks were high, sharp and prominent; his nose was large, long, blunt, and a little awry towards the right eye; his chin was sharp and up-curved; his eyebrows cropped out like a huge rock on the brow of a hill; his long sallow face was wrinkled and dry, with a hair here and there in the surface; his cheeks were leathery; his ears were large, and ran out almost at right angles to his head, caused partly by heavy hats and partly by nature; his lower lip was thick, hanging and under-curved, while his chin reached for the lip up-curved; his neck was neat and trim, his head being well balanced on it; there was a large mole on his cheek, and Adam’s apple on his throat. Thus stood, walked, acted and looked Abraham Lincoln.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### FIFTY YEARS AFTER

THESE is a specific meaning in the growing popularity of Abraham Lincoln. His life, romantic in the extreme, lent itself easily to the popular imagination. The man whose name was hardly known a day before his nomination was elevated to the Presidency of the United States. Kings and potentates of the world sent condolences to a whole nation for the loss of one who had been a rail-splitter and a flat-boatman. For a generation after his death it was this phase of his life which was emphasized with patriotic fervour. The boy of ten was told of this poor child born in a log cabin, who did his sums at night by the light of the open fire, scratching them on a wooden shovel, and who grew so tall that he had to split many rails to earn enough to buy himself the very long trousers he needed. When this boy grew up into a man he became President of the United States of America.

For the older child the story went a little farther—that when he became President slavery existed in this, “the land of the free and the home of the brave,” which so outraged the kind heart of the good President that he issued an Emancipation Proclamation which freed all the slaves at once.

And even for the people at large his name had almost the same bed-time story effect, a little more detailed

in its outline, but with as much breathless hero-worship, with the desire to pile virtue upon virtue upon him who had done so much more for them than they had asked, or understood or appreciated at the time.

He brought them victory, and the pleasure of living out this success swept from their mind the need of an analysis of this victory. What did they gain? What new social order had he brought them? Did he grasp the ideal he strove for?

Moreover, it was not even asked who was the man and what in truth was the nature of his life. If he was a rail-splitter and a flat-boatman he very early left that class to join one of the most successful and powerful professions of pioneer America, that of the law, which practically ruled its political destinies for over a century, and that he was one of the leading men in that profession in his state. Also that he was drawn still farther from the common labourer by an extremely aristocratic marriage. Before the kings and potentates of the world could lay wreaths on the bier of a rail-splitter and a flat-boatman, he had long to leave that class and to acquire power. He stood, like all pioneer America, for the free acquisition by each of the bounties of nature. The ideal was ultimately to acquire and to own wealth, not to labour for all time.

Lincoln made this possible by the elimination of the large landlord class. Capital was given room to develop, and in 1864 it was believed that democracy was at last firmly established in America, and this for black and white alike.

The vast literature that has been collected under the name of Lincoln shows no change in method from

the first day when his name was suddenly sprung before the people as the Presidential candidate of 1860. To the two short biographies of the time, which were printed as campaign tracts, are now added the historical facts of his administration, plus thousands upon thousands of eulogies, sermons, odes and panegyrics. By 1900 the Lincoln bibliography contained 135 pages of royal octavo. There were full 800 titles of books and pamphlets. There were 14 in French, twice as many in German, some Italian and Spanish, one Welsh, one Japanese, one Russian and a translation in Greek. This bibliography is exclusive of magazine articles, the number of which is redoubled at each succeeding birthday celebration. There are Lincoln museums and Lincolnania in nearly every large centre of the United States, but of all this vast amount of Lincoln matter nine-tenths are tributes and eulogies of the man. Nothing has been added to the ten-volume history of his life, published from the diaries of his secretaries, Nicolay and Hay. More minute details, more anecdotes, more stray pencil notes have been collected, but only to-day, when the age he lived in has been entirely swept away and a new alignment is at hand, has there grown up a new devotion and a new meaning to the name of Lincoln. He is no longer the hero of the school-boy patriot or the fanciful romantic figure directed by mystic forces far above the understanding of average man. He has become the best expression of a period in American history to which the small capitalist, dispossessed by the monopolies of the East, is eager to return, and they are calling upon him to lead them out of Egypt again. The new alignment is be-



tween the West and the South against the moneyed East.

The boast that a great moral war was undertaken for the liberation of the Negro was proudly embraced by the whole country for the two generations that it enjoyed the power this war brought it. But that the war was not undertaken for the Negro can be seen in the fact that in ten years after the war the Negro was entirely abandoned in this struggle for power.

The history of reconstruction, as the period is called in which the victorious Republican Party saw to it, to quote Lincoln, that "the bag of Union" was tied tight, and incidentally to its liking, and more the history of "reconstruction undone" which came by 1875, gives full proof that Lincoln's forebodings as to the welfare of the Negro had good cause. While the economic position of the whole country rested on the free land of the West, even the most radical elements refused to see that the Negroes were receiving no share in this land and in the national development in general, and were unlikely to receive any. The armies were kept in the South for some time, and the Negro was endowed with a vote and with paper rights secured by the 14th and 15th Amendments, which conferred the rights of citizenship and suffrage upon him, but with no permanent economic benefits whatever.

Congress was sincere for the time being in its desire to secure liberties to the Negro, but it was an impossible task, due to the hostile attitude of the country at large. It established a Freedman's Bureau, which assisted the Negroes in finding sustenance, and in defining their new privileges, and undertook the sale of public lands

for their benefit, and appropriated the property of the Confederate Government for their education. Congress supported the Freedman's Bureau with suitable legislation, making it a penal offence to obstruct or hinder its acts.

But beyond thus shifting the burden of the Negro on the former slaveholder, Congress could do nothing. So fearful was the West that it would be asked to share the burden, or that it would be forced to divide the new land with this new fellow-citizen, that in 1867 and 1868, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and Kansas rejected by popular vote the proposition of endowing the Negro with the suffrage. Any movement of emigration to the West was violently opposed by this section, and by the South itself, who had as little desire to see its labour move away after the war as it did before.

Congress, therefore, after supporting the Negro with all its power, going to the length of impeaching President Johnson for high crimes and misdemeanours because of his opposition to its tactics, had early to abandon him. Johnson held truly that he was following out the policies of Lincoln in this matter of reconstruction, but having neither the tact nor the pliability of Lincoln soon came to an absolute break with Congress.

By the autumn of 1865, under the direction of Johnson, every Southern State except Texas had re-established their governments on the plan outlined by an Amnesty Proclamation, which was substantially the same as Lincoln's, except that it increased the list of those to be excluded from its privileges, among whom were those with over 20,000 acres of land.

However, the governments thus established not

only brought forward men prominent as Secessionists, but the governments themselves, though accepting the 13th Amendment, which prohibited both slavery and involuntary servitude except for punishment of crime, immediately proceeded to pass acts whereby the former slaves could be kept in involuntary servitude if not in real slavery. Statutes were enacted with regard to employment, labour contracts and vagrancy, which had for their special object the retention of the blacks in a form of servitude. A current rate of wages was fixed, and those who refused to work according to this schedule were to be considered vagrants and subjected to penalties. Innumerable minor offences and misdemeanours were made punishable by fines, and if the fine could not be paid the culprit was to be hired out by judicial process. An apprentice system was established by which Negroes who were minors were bound to labour until a certain age. A system of written contracts of labour or licences to perform work were issued by the mayors or police, and when a Negro challenged at any time was unable to produce this "passport" he was arrested as a vagrant and fined, and if unable to pay the fine, as most of these Negroes were—for slavery was not conducive to the amassing of capital—he was made to pay off his fine by compulsory labour.

To Congress these acts were evidences of unfaithfulness to the results of the war, and it decided that it had a right to reconstruct the states according to its own will and plan; that "a territory coming into the Union becomes a state, and a state by going out of the Union becomes a territory," and "that the resistance of the South to the Constitution and laws of the Union

had suspended all Federal law as far as they were concerned, and that the law did not revive with regard to them until once more declared in force . . . by the law-making and war-making power of the general Government—that is, by Congress.”

Congress virtually adopted this idea, and in organizing omitted the names of the states which had seceded, and decided not to accept any Senator or representative from the Southern States until the state itself should be readmitted. To further these reconstruction plans it was decided that the troops be kept in the South, and to hinder the states in their efforts to re-enslave the Negro, the 14th Amendment was adopted, which made all persons born or naturalized in the United States citizens of the United States, and made the acceptance of this amendment necessary to the recognition of a state by Congress.

To enforce this conception, that the South was now composed of territories, acts were passed to curb the President's authority on the one hand, and on the other to permit the laying out of the whole Southern Territory, with the exception of Tennessee, which had already been admitted, into five military groups. The process of reconstruction was to be conducted by the military commanders. They were to enroll all male citizens not disqualified or excluded by the 14th Amendment, and they were then to hold an election for delegates to a State Convention. The number of delegates chosen to this Convention were to be apportioned to the registered number of voters in each district. These Conventions were to frame constitutions, which were to give the vote to all classes of citizens who had

been permitted to vote for the delegates. The constitution was to be submitted to the same voters for ratification, and if adopted to be sent to Congress through the President for approval. As soon as Congress should approve these state constitutions each state was to be admitted to representation, on condition that its Legislature ratified the 14th Amendment. Meanwhile, the Government of the South was to be subject in all respects to the authority of the United States.

By June 1868, Arkansas, North and South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Louisiana were ready for admission. Virginia, Mississippi and Texas failed to obtain readmission because they could not obtain popular majorities for the constitutions framed by the reconstructing conventions, and Georgia was held off because she declared negroes ineligible for office. Finally, by 30th January 1871, all states were readmitted.

On 26th February 1869 Congress proposed a 15th Amendment, which forbade the United States or any state to deny or abridge the rights of citizens to vote on account of "race, colour or previous condition of servitude." This was found necessary because, though the 14th Amendment conferred the rights of citizenship upon the freed Negro, and in the careful study of that amendment it is evident that it was the will of the legislators to offer them by that right all the concomitant rights of citizenship, such as the franchise, the right to bear arms, the right to public conveyances, railway stations and theatres on the same footing with the white, the right to marry a person of another colour and the right to an equal schooling, the Southern States refused to interpret the 14th Amendment in that way.

After a long discussion Congress decided not to enumerate the rights of citizenship in the 15th Amendment, but only laid stress on the right to vote. The acceptance of the 15th Amendment was made an article of admission to Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas. This amendment was finally accepted by three-fourths of the states, and it was declared enforced 30th March 1870.

At the same time, Congress supplemented the Amendments by penal legislation. On 31st May 1870 and 20th April 1870 it passed certain laws called popularly "Force Bills," which pronounced fines and imprisonments for placing obstacles or attempting to hinder Negro suffrage. It goes without saying that this legislation was absolutely necessary if the conferring of citizenship upon the Negro was meant in earnest, for not only could the South not be trusted to carry out the spirit of these Amendments, but they had actually begun a systematized and generally-recognized campaign to prevent the Negro by every means in their power from the use of the ballot. What the state governments were prevented from doing by legislation the conquered whites did by force. They banded themselves together into secret orders, known in the early stages as "Ku-Klux Gangs," and later "White Leagues" or "Orders of the White Camellias," which had for their purpose the intimidation of the blacks. Murder and violence were used to keep them from the polls.

But as Congress did not keep up a uniform interest in the Negro, the following year, 1872, a General Amnesty Act was passed which relieved the persons in the South

from the political disabilities some of the previous acts of Congress had placed on them. At the same time, to this growing disinterestedness in the Negro problem was added the direct and potent influence of the Supreme Court of the United States, which began to pass legislation in favour of the reactionary principles of states rights as opposed to Federal control. In the two famous cases, one called "*Texas versus White*," it maintained that the states had retained their statehood intact; and in the following year, while interpreting the 14th and 15th Amendments in the so-called "*Slaughter-House Cases*," it declared that the Southern States could control the privileges of their citizens, and that the constitutional provisions did not place the citizens under control of the Federal Government, but under the State Government.

It continued in this way bit by bit to undo the work of the Republicans, who desired to bring the results of the war to a fruitful consummation. That the war should not absolutely have been for no purpose it was the desire at least to maintain the power of the Republican Party which had undertaken the war and had brought about union and emancipation. This could only have been done by a Federal control of the elections. As the elections in the South could not possibly come off peaceably and quietly with the whites united in attempts to prevent the newly-enfranchised Negroes from voting, Federal troops were called to maintain order, and returning boards were created to judge upon the incessantly-contested results.

A struggle soon took place between both sides for the control of these boards. Often, as in the case of

Louisiana in the autumn of 1872, two returning boards claimed official authority, each one deciding for members of its own party, and two rival governments were set up. The question was generally settled by the intervention of Federal troops, who came to the support of the Republicans. In 1874 and 1875 there were similar calls for Federal troops from Republican officials about to be dislodged by the conservative elements, but Grant, who was President at this time, refused to send troops. "The public are tired out," he said, "with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South," and the great majority "are ready now to condemn any interference on the part of the Government."

This was true. The final flicker of Republican interference in the South was in the Presidential election of 1876. After a hotly-contested struggle caused by the anomaly of the dual returning boards, a commission decided, two days before the inauguration, that the Republican candidate, Hayes, was President. But though the supremacy of the Republican Party was prolonged for four more years, the Republican principle of Federal interference for the sake of the Negro was entirely abandoned. Hayes, immediately after his inauguration, withdrew all the troops from the South, and failed to support the Republican *de facto* governments by whose vote he had been elected. The old ante-war Democrats now filled the posts of the South, and what is known as the Solid South was formed, Democratic and firmly determined to keep the Negro in political and social subjection to the white.

By 1877 the Negro was left in the power of the men who, only eleven years before, had been forced to lay



down their arms in an attempt to frame a whole Government, the corner-stone of which was to be Negro slavery. The very man who pronounced this principle of government, and who was Vice-President during the five years of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens, was returned as Senator from Georgia to the Congress of the United States.

Here began the "undoing of reconstruction," by which the states left to themselves were able by cajolery or ingenious legislation practically to eliminate the Negro vote. An Act was passed in 1877 which prohibited the United States Marshals the use of troops in the South. By 1888 the average vote cast for a member of Congress in five Southern States was less than one-quarter of the votes cast in five Northern States, so thoroughly was the Negro vote done away with. The principal device to-day is by amendments to the State Constitutions, demanding literary qualifications for the exercise of the suffrage, from which the whites are exempt by special description or by the Administration.

Congress was slower in abandoning the Negro than the Supreme Court, which decided against the validity of any act which meant to secure equal rights for the Negroes, and had even suggested the above legislation to the South, by deciding that the demand of a reasonable pre-requisite to voting, such as the poll-tax, would not be considered unconstitutional. In 1875 Congress passed a Civil Rights Act, which meant to assure the Negroes equal accommodations with white persons in theatres and public conveyances, but in 1883 the Court declared this Act unconstitutional, limiting the power

of Congress to a mere disallowance of discrimination. The result is that "Jim Crow laws" are enacted in every state of the South, which prohibit Negroes from travelling in the same conveyance, entering the same door of a railway station, and in many places walking on the same side of the street with the whites. They are segregated in the schools, and it is a felony, punished by eighteen and twenty years of imprisonment, for black and white to marry. There is no Federal control of education, and though the Negro is taxed to the same extent as the white, not a tenth of this money goes to their own schooling. To-day, for the first time, this system of segregation has reached even to the Federal offices, and departments of coloured civil servants are being established by the incoming Democratic Administration.

The same steady propaganda that was made by the Southerners before the war, that it is "their problem," and that they and they only know how to deal with it, is being made again, and being more and more accepted by the North, so that the suggestion was put forth quite confidently by the South that the 15th Amendment might in the very near future be repealed actually. It has been virtually repealed in the South by State legislation. Jealousy of property is more often the true cause for lynch law than the current excuse of rape. Peonage, convict labour, prohibition of emigration keep the Negro a cheap labourer, and the general social discrimination hold him a subject race.

The sad misanthropy of Lincoln, which made him doubt the possibility of leaving him unprotected on the hands of his former owner, shows only too good

cause. But though the boast of the North and the Republican party was the freeing of the Negro, it is quite evident that the purpose of this freedom was not for him, but for certain definite economic ends. "In giving freedom to the slave," said Lincoln, "we assure freedom to the free." While freedom was maintained by the saving of the free land for the people, a revolution was taking place in the basis of wealth. Industries and manufacture and the railways sent the age of Lincoln flying back into the historic past. The decade of Federal control that was given to the Negro, and the economic subjugation of the South that continued for two generations, was for the purpose of maintaining the newly-made business-man of the North in power. He held for his principle that government by the protective tariff and the gold standard was to plough the ground ready for the "activities of business." Further than that government was not to go. The gambling phrase, "Stand pat," was used to designate this philosophy. The freedom of the small landholder to the land was translated into the freedom of the man of business to any combination of capital which brought profits. For this both the Senate and the courts, individualistic as of old, were amenable in seeing that Government "stood pat," and that its policies in no way interfered with the "business man."

The result of course was a speedy concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, and the centring of capital into trusts and monopolies unequalled in any other country. While this economic development was going on, and before it was fully consummated, the

people failed to see that the Union for which Lincoln fought was being subverted into a Union with a dominant class, such as existed on the eve of the War of Secession, the difference being that then the struggle was between the large and the small landowner, and now it is between the large and the small capitalist. Until this was clearly seen Lincoln was the picturesque plain man of the people, who saved the country for the freedom of business, and incidentally for the freedom of a race.

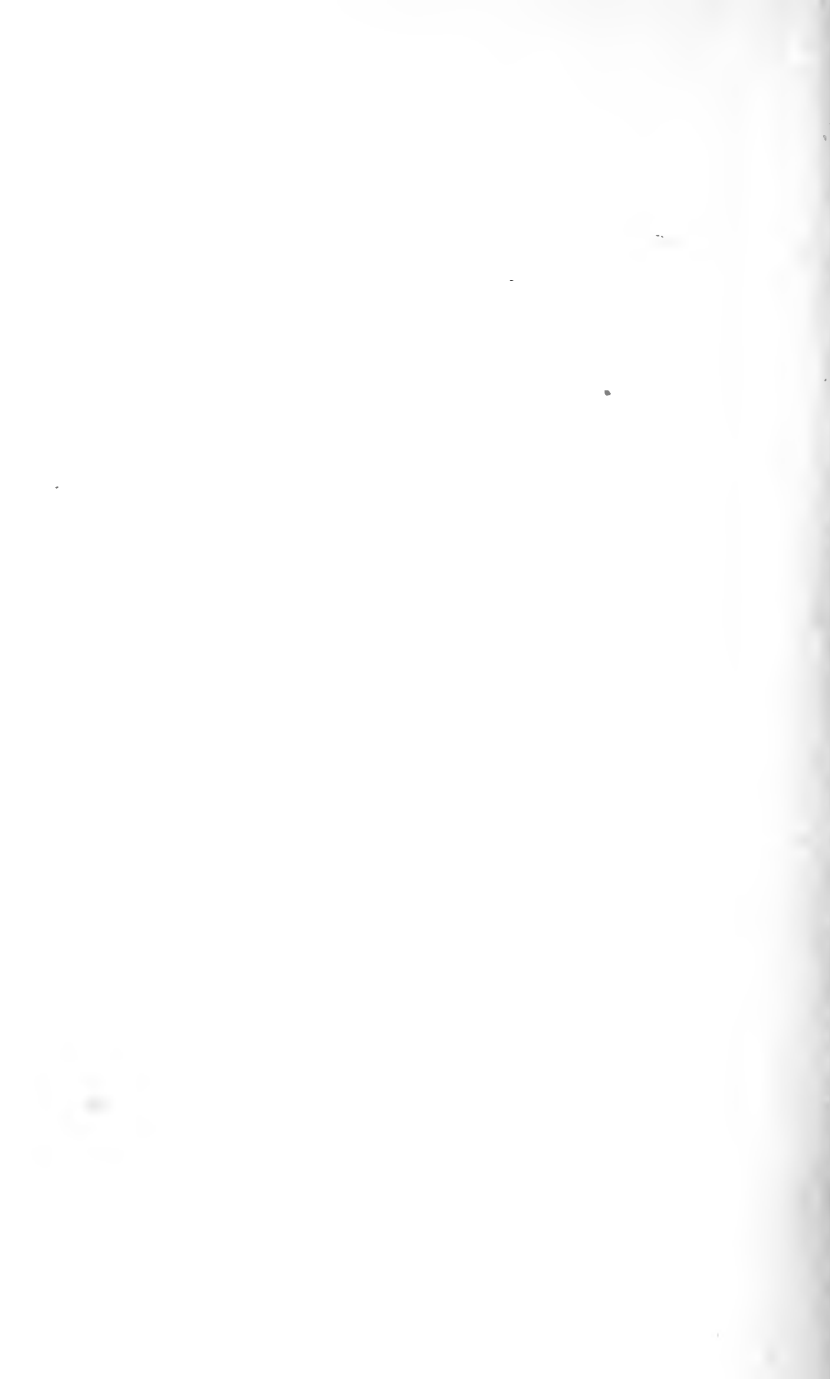
In the present alignment of forces, in which the dispossessed middle class has rushed to a control of Government in its anxiety to save itself from utter annihilation by the plutocracy, his name is invoked for the social ideals he presented, not for the political acts he helped fulfil. Both factions of the Republican Party, now split in two, claim him as their sponsor; the Progressives because they are opposed to monopolies and trusts, and in his refusal to accept the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court he seems to agree with their platform, which asserts the right of appeal from the courts. The "stand-pat" Republicans, on the other hand, claim him with equal ardour, for, to quote ex-President William H. Taft, "he stood steadfastly by the Constitution. He defended loyally and unswervingly the fundamental law of the land."

He has become the tutelary saint of all politics and all political parties. In many states Conservatives and Progressives appealed to the courts for the right to name their side "The Lincoln Party," and the name has now come to signify various contradictory factions in the various states.

It is true that he suits all sides in the present-day problems, for he is a stranger to them all. But the individualistic philosophy of the pioneer has no intrinsic meaning in this new, volatile, industrial America. To him business is a personal liberty and property a personal right, and his government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" could hardly bridge the fifty years of growth which permitted the almost crushed middle class, on its own initiative, to employ the machinery of Government for the control of business in its own behalf.

The new America is struggling to return to the ideal of this "First American" by ways foreign and strange to him. The right to free business must be maintained through the feared and respected institution of Government, while the right to free land can be left to the settler himself without the checks and balances of organization.

But reaching out into the new life the American is calling upon him who had once before in a similar alignment led him out from the darkness with such masterly and loving hands. Behind the ægis of Lincoln he is advancing towards the new order of social control—small capitalistic and closely-knit together.



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